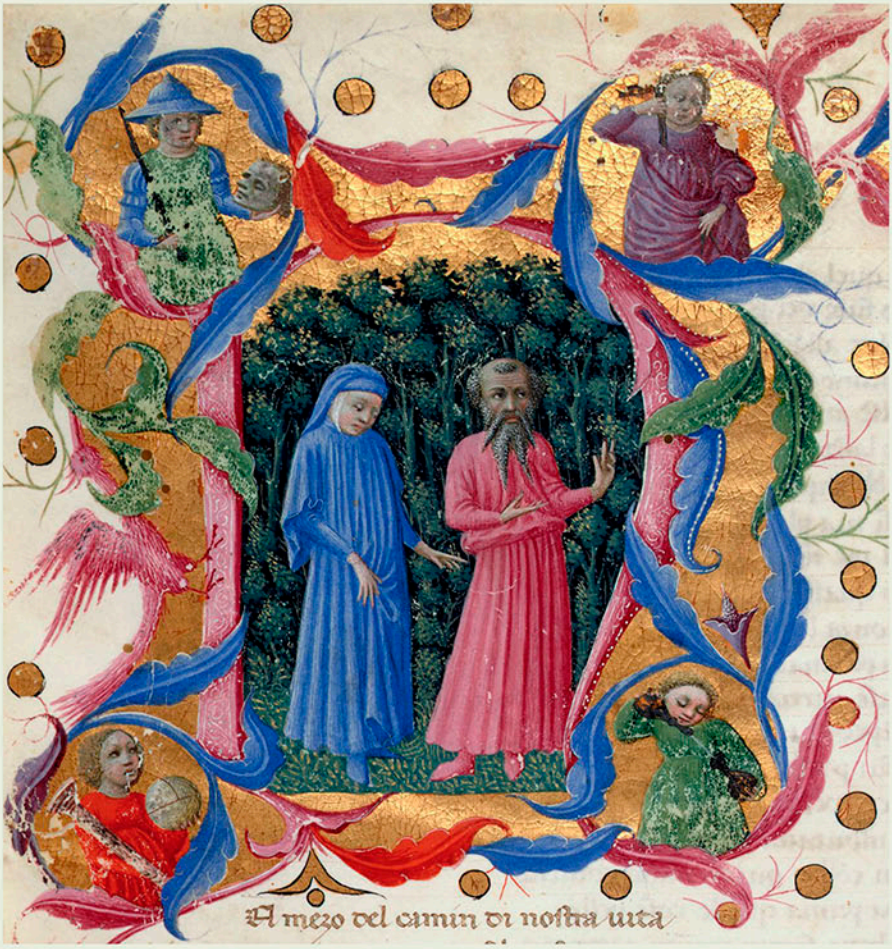
GEORGE CORBETT

Dante's Christian Ethics

Purgatory and Its Moral Contexts



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DANTE'S CHRISTIAN ETHICS

This book is a major reappraisal of the *Commedia* as originally envisaged by Dante: as a work of ethics. Privileging the ethical, Corbett increases our appreciation of Dante's eschatological innovations and literary genius. Drawing upon a wider range of moral contexts than in previous studies, this book presents an overarching account of the complex ordering and political programme of Dante's afterlife. Balancing close readings with a lucid overview of Dante's *Commedia* as an ethical and political manifesto, Corbett cogently approaches the poem through its moral structure. The book provides detailed interpretations of three particularly significant vices – pride, sloth, and avarice – and the three terraces of Purgatory devoted to them. While scholars often register Dante's explicit confession of pride, this volume uncovers Dante's implicit confession of sloth and prodigality (the opposing sub-vice of avarice) through Statius, his moral cypher. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

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DANTE'S CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Purgatory and Its Moral Contexts

GEORGE CORBETT
University of St Andrews

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A. Dante

Unless otherwise stated, the editions of Dante's works may be found in *Le Opere di Dante*, edited by F. Brambilla Ageno, G. Contini, D. De Robertis, G. Gorni, F. Mazzoni, R. Migliorini Fissi, P. V. Mengaldo, G. Petrocchi, E. Pistelli, and P. Shaw, and revised by D. De Robertis and G. Breschi (Florence: Polistampa, 2012).

A.1 Vernacular Works

Inf. *Inferno*
Purg. *Purgatorio*
Par. *Paradiso*
Conv. *Convivio*
VN *Vita nova*

A.2 Latin Works

DVE *De vulgari eloquentia*
Mon. *Monarchia*
Epist. *Epistole*
Ecl. *Eclogae*

B. English Translations

Unless otherwise stated, the translations are adapted from the following readily available and literally translated English editions.

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B.1 Vernacular Works

Convivio: A Dual-Language Critical Edition, ed. and trans. by Andrew Frisardi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
Dante's Lyric Poetry, trans. by Kenelm Foster and Patrick Boyde, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).
The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling; introduction and notes by Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996–2011).
La Vita Nuova, trans. by Mark Musa (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1962).

B.2 Latin Works

Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio, trans. by Philip H. Wicksteed and Edmund G. Gardner (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970).
De vulgari eloquentia, ed. and trans. by Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
The Letters of Dante, trans. by Paget J. Toynbee, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); for the political epistles, however, *Dante Alighieri: Four Political Letters*, trans. by Claire Honess (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007).
Monarchy, ed. and trans. by Prue Shaw. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

In most instances, the translation [in square brackets] follows the original passage. Where the sense of the original passage is clear from the main text, the original passage (in parentheses) follows the paraphrase. Discussion is always with regard to the passage in the original.

C. Commentaries

The following commentaries on the *Commedia* are cited according to the *Dartmouth Dante Project* http://dante.dartmouth.edu/ (accessed 28 June 2018):

Jacopo Alighieri (1322)
Graziolo Bambaglioli (1324)

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Jacopo della Lana (1324–28)
Guido da Pisa (1327–28)
L'Ottimo Commento (1333)
Anonimo Selmiano (c. 1337)
Pietro Alighieri [1] (1340–42)
Pietro Alighieri [2] (1344–55)
Pietro Alighieri [3] (1359–64)
Codice cassinese (1460–75)
Choise ambrosiane (1355)
Gugliemo Maramauro (1369–73)
Giovanni Boccaccio (1373–75)
Benvenuto da Imola (1375–80)
Francesco da Buti (1385–95)
Johannis de Serravalle (1416–17)
Alessandro Vellutello (1544)
Lodovico Castelvetro (1570)
Gabriele Rossetti (1826–27)
Giacomo Poletto (1894)
Ernesto Trucchi (1936)
Natalino Sapegno (1955–57)
Giovanni Fallani (1965)
Giuseppe Giacalone (1968)
Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio (1979)
Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi (1991–97)
Robert Hollander (2000–7)
Nicola Fosca (2003–15)

The citation style used is: 'name', gloss to *cantica*, 'canto', 'line' (e.g., 'Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* XI, 76–90').

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Introduction

The *Epistle to Cangrande* classifies Dante's *Commedia* as 'a work of ethics' (*morale negotium, sive ethica*): its stated purpose is to lead people from the misery of sin and direct them to the beatitude of Heaven.[1] If the epistle was written by Dante, as the balance of scholarship would currently suggest, to read the poem ethically is to read it as Dante originally intended. If this part of the epistle was not written by him, as some scholars still argue, the fact remains that an important early glossator of the poem thought it natural and appropriate to classify the poem in this way.[2] In the narrative itself, the poem's ethical goal is unambiguous: Beatrice commands Dante-character to write 'for the good of the world which lives badly' ('in pro del mondo che mal vive'; *Purg.* XXXII, 103). Moreover, as is conventional in ethical treatises, the *Commedia* is described

[1] *Epist.* XIII, 16: 'Genus vero phylosophie sub quo hic in toto et parte proceditur, est morale negotium, sive ethica; quia non ad speculandum, sed ad opus inventum est totum et pars'; XIII, 15: 'finis totius et partis est removere viventes in hac vita de statu miserie et perducere ad statum felicitatis.' Brunetto Latini, author of *Il Tesoretto* (a clear precursor to his more illustrious student's *Commedia*), similarly classifies poetry, following Cicero, as a branch of 'civil science' ('la civile scienza'), with a clear ethical purpose to teach citizens the path of good action ('per dare alla gente insegnamento e via di ben fare'). See Brunetto Latini, *La rettorica*, ed. by Francesco Maggini (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), p. 49. In the *Commedia*, Brunetto commends his protégé Dante for his own good actions ('tuo ben far'; *Inf.* XI, 28–33).

[2] See Dante Alighieri, *Epistola a Cangrande*, ed. by Enzo Cecchini (Florence: Giunti, 1995), XIII. 8. The authenticity of the *Cangrande* epistle (or sections of the epistle) is disputed. Cecchini argues that the evidence balances in favour of authenticity (see *Epistola*, pp. viii–xxv), as does Robert Hollander in his important study, *Dante's Epistle to Cangrande* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 1–101. This view is also sustained by Luca Azzetta, 'Le chiose alla *Commedia* di Andrea Lancia, *L'Epistola a Can Grande* e altre questioni danteschi', *L'Alighieri*, 21 (2003), 5–76. As Robert Durling notes, this philological discussion has been inflected by varying opinions about the status of Dante's journey (thus, for example, those in favour of the 'divinely inspired prophet' view, such as Nardi, have tended to deny the authenticity of the epistle). Durling concludes that 'the weight of evidence, much of which has only recently come to light points towards its authenticity'. See Robert M. Durling, 'Introduction', in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Vol. 3: Paradiso*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Durling with notes by Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 3–19 (p. 5).

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in medicinal terms: Cacciaguida inspires his descendent with the courage to 'make plain all your vision . . . For if your voice is grievous at first taste, it will afterwards leave vital nourishment when it is digested' ('tutta tua visïon fa manifesta . . . Ché se la voce tua sarà molesta / nel primo gusto, vital nodrimento / lascerà poi, quando sarà digesto'; *Par.* XVII, 128, 130–32). Dante's poem is 'vital' (life-giving) nourishment because it may save its reader from damnation, the second death. Indeed, by depicting the state of souls in the afterlife, the *Commedia* shows how a person – through the use of his or her free will – may merit eternal happiness in Paradise, warrant eternal damnation in Hell, or require temporary expiation for sin in Purgatory.[3]

Thus, Dante presents his eschatological imagination as at the service of a very immediate practical purpose: the salvation of souls in the here and now. Dante's primary aim, in other words, was neither to produce an innovative depiction of the three realms of the Christian afterlife nor to write a poetic masterpiece for Christendom to rival the epics of Classical antiquity (although he is justly celebrated for achieving both these goals). Rather, Dante's imaginative vision and poetic genius served more important ethical and, I would argue, political goals: to transform people's moral lives and to reform the institutions that governed them.[4] If we avoid the poem's ethical content, we potentially jeopardize not only the poem's status as a work of ethics and its function (to lead humankind to salvation) but even its genre as a 'Comedy': as the *Epistle to Cangrande* emphasises, the poem is called a comedy at least in part because – at a narrative level – it begins badly (in Hell) but ends well (in Paradise) and – at a moral level – it aims to effect the same felicitous outcome for its readers.[5] It is my contention, moreover, that a rebalancing in favour of the ethical actually serves to accentuate our appreciation of Dante's eschatological originality and literary brilliance.

[3] *Epist.* XIII, 11: 'Nam si totius operis litteraliter sumpti sic est subiectum, status animarum post mortem . . . Et si totius operis allegorice sumpti subiectum est homo prout merendo et demerendo per arbitrii libertatem est iustitie premiandi et puniendi obnoxious.'

[4] The lectura Dantis tradition in Florence was inaugurated by Boccaccio with a similarly ethical mandate: to help the poem's audience understand fully its moral content and, thereby, 'aspire to virtue, shun vice, and cultivate eloquence'. See Simon Gilson, 'Modes of Reading in Boccaccio's *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia*', in *Interpreting Dante: Essays on the Traditions of Dante Commentary*, ed. by Paola Nasti and Claudia Rossignoli (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), pp. 250–82 (p. 253).

[5] *Epist.* XIII, 10: 'Et per hoc patet quod Comedia dicitur presens opus. Nam si ad materiam respiciamus, a principio horribilis et fetida est, quia Infernus, in fine prospera, desiderabilis et grata, quia Paradisus . . .'

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A deeply influential tradition of Dante scholarship, nonetheless, has excluded or downplayed ethical considerations.[6] Arguably, this tendency may have been exaggerated because of the disciplinary preoccupations and emphases of the fields in which the poem has most commonly been researched and taught in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Italian Studies and Comparative Literature.[7] Although there have been significant studies over the last two decades that address Dante's ethics, most of these emphasise some other aspect or theme of his work. For example, Holmes, Williams, and Lombardi focus on the relationship between ethics and eros; Keen and Honess on the relationship between ethics and politics; Steinberg on the relationship between ethics and law; and Webb on the relationship between ethics and personhood.[8] Only two recent studies in English have specifically focused on Dante's ethics: Cogan's *The*

[6] Benedetto Croce is customarily taken as a reference point for those who seek to select, or salvage, the 'poetic' from the 'doctrinal' or 'ethical'. As Patrick Boyde remarks, 'Benedetto Croce did manage to persuade a whole generation of critics in Italy that the ideological framework and content of the *Comedy* had proved an obstacle to the free expression of Dante's poetic genius'. See Patrick Boyde, *Dante Philomythes and Philosopher: Man in the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1–2. John Freccero also explicitly confronts the Crocean paradigm of separating the 'aesthetic' from the 'theological', and his readings seek to re-integrate them. See John Freccero, *The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. and with an introduction by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986). Noticeably absent from Freccero's collection of essays, however, is a treatment of Purgatory. There is extensive study of *Inferno* (pp. 1–185), a couple of essays on Ante-Purgatory (pp. 186–208), and three essays on *Paradiso* (pp. 209–57). I would suggest that Purgatory, of all the regions of Dante's afterlife, most fully enacts Dante's poetics of conversion.

[7] Patrick Boyde registers a tendency of some literary critics to 'seem curiously little interested in *what* Dante is saying or *why*' (Boyde, *Dante Philomythes*, pp. 1–2). Even within literary studies, Dante scholars have been slow to respond to a renewed attention to the relationship between ethics and literature. See Robin Kirkpatrick and George Corbett, '"E lascia pur grattar. . ." Language, Narrative and Ethics in the *Commedia*', in *Dante the Lyric and Ethical Poet*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański and Martin McLaughlin (Oxford: Legenda, 2010), pp. 56–71. Although the interdiscipline of ethics and literature has more recently been 'the subject of extended discussion . . . Dante has rarely entered into these considerations. Nor has the discussion often concerned itself with matters of directly ethical practice' (p. 56).

[8] Olivia Holmes, *Dante's Two Beloveds: Ethics and Erotics in the 'Divine Comedy'* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Pamela Williams, *Through Human Love to God: Essays on Dante and Petrarch* (Leicester, UK: Troubador Publishing, 2007); Elena Lombardi, *The Syntax of Desire: Language and Love in Augustine, the Modistae, Dante* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), and Elena Lombardi, *The Wings of the Doves: Love and Desire in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2012). Although my own approach is different from that of these three scholars, I pick up a number of their concerns (for example, with regard to Williams's emphasis on acedia in *Through Human Love*, pp. 19–34). With regard to ethics and politics, see Catherine Keen, *Dante and the City* (Stroud, UK: Tempus, 2003), and Claire Honess, *From Florence to the Heavenly City: The Poetry of Citizenship in Dante* (Oxford: Legenda, 2006). For the treatment of ethics and law, see Justin Steinberg, *Dante and the Limits of the Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and for a study of contemporary and medieval conceptualisations of personhood, and their implications for reading the *Commedia,* see Heather Webb, *Dante's Persons: An Ethics of the Transhuman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

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Design in the Wax: The Structure of the 'Divine Comedy' and Its Meaning and Boyde's *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante's 'Comedy'*.[9] This sparsity persists despite a growing scholarly interest in Dante's ethics.[10] The time seems ripe, therefore, for re-addressing the question of Dante's ethics in a more rounded treatment. Where Cogan uses Aquinas as the predominant theoretical framework, Boyde draws principally on philosophical and Classical sources.[11] In this book, I explore, in addition, the influence of broader Christian contexts on Dante's ethical vision.[12]

[9] Marc Cogan, *The Design in the Wax: The Structure of the 'Divine Comedy' and Its Meaning* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); Patrick Boyde, *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante's 'Comedy'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also Patrick Boyde, *Perception and Passion in Dante's 'Comedy'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially 'Part IV: Combined Operations', pp. 215–301. There are, of course, other less scholarly, but nonetheless valuable studies intended for a broader audience; see, for example, Raymond Angelo Bellioti, *Dante's Deadly Sins: Moral Philosophy in Hell* (Chichester: Wiley, 2011). More localised studies of aspects of Dante's ethics include Ruth Chester, 'Virtue in Dante', in *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. by Claire Honess and Matthew Treherne, 2 vols. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), II, pp. 211–52. Finally, there are studies of ethics in relation to individual canticles, sections, or cantos of the poem. Chapter 3 of my book, for example, presents a counter-argument to Scott's reading of Dante's Purgatory in terms of philosophical principles: see John A. Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

[10] See, for example, the essay collections *Etica e teologia nella Commedia di Dante: Atti del Seminario Internazionale, Torino, 5–6 Ottobre 2006*, ed. by Erminia Ardissino (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009); *Dante the Lyric and Ethical Poet*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański and Martin McLaughlin (Oxford: Legenda, 2010); and *Dante and the Seven Deadly Sins: Twelve Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. by John C. Barnes and Daragh O'Connell (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017).

[11] For Cogan's justification of his overall strategy, see 'Dante and Aquinas', in *Design in the Wax,* pp. xxiii–xxiv. Boyde seems most interested in philosophical and Classical sources, a tendency registered even in his title *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante's 'Comedy'*, with its calque of Ulysses' speech in *Inferno* XXVI. Even when considering the sin of pride, for example, Boyde relies predominantly on Classical treatments, with no reference to preaching and penitential literature ('Chapter 8: Pride', in *Human Vices*, pp. 174–97; see also *Perception and Passion*, p. 209); my own reading in Chapter 5 thus offers a complementary, albeit very different perspective on this terrace by drawing principally on the Christian and theological contexts.

[12] In examining Dante's treatment of ethics, it may be tempting to concentrate too exclusively on easily available sources in Classical literature and philosophy (like Boyde) or scholastic theology (like Cogan). However, it is evident that Dante was also drawing from his immediate Christian literary and oral culture – from sermons, liturgy, compilations, and confessional manuals. For example, Carlo Delcorno has emphasised the influence of the homiletic tradition on Dante's literary style, while Martinez has highlighted the need to draw further attention to the liturgy in Dante's poem. See Carlo Delcorno, 'Dante e l'exemplum medievale', *Lettere Italiane* 25: 1 (1983), 3–28; and Ronald Martinez, 'Dante and the Poem of the Liturgy', in Honess and Treherne (eds.), *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, II, pp. 89–156. More recently, Zane D. R. Mackin has demonstrated that 'Dante's poem was influential to preachers … because the poem had already incorporated the form and content of sermons into its own textuality' (Zane D. R. Mackin, *Dante Praedicator: Sermons and Preaching Culture in the* Commedia [doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2013], p. 6). Nevertheless, Mackin does not draw out the implications of this approach for a reading of *Purgatorio*. See also Nicolò Maldina, *In pro del mondo: Dante, la predicazione e i generi della letteratura religiosa medievale* (Rome: Salerno, 2017). In medieval studies as a whole, there has been a huge increase in scholarship on the virtues and vices. For example, as Newhauser pointed out

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I also seek to make a distinct contribution to three wider currents in contemporary Dante scholarship: the reappraisal of Dante's theology, the re-examination of his intellectual formation, and the renewed investigation of the *Commedia*'s narrative structure. In considering Dante as Christian sinner and moralist, this book forms part of an increasing cluster of work on Dante's status as *poeta theologus* and on the nature of his poem as theology.[13] In terms of Dante's intellectual formation, I open up new contexts – in preaching and penitential sources – for Dante's Christian ethics, thereby contributing to a shift of scholarly attention away from more bookish 'high' Aristotelian philosophy and rationalistic theology and towards the popular visceral contexts of practical Christianity in Dante's time.[14] With regard to narrative structure, the research for this book coincided with *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, a collaborative project which systematically explored vertical correspondences between same-numbered cantos across the three canticles.[15] Many interpretations of the poem have emerged through the canto-by-canto readings customary

in 2012, Bloomsfield's (1952) seminal study on the seven deadly sins opened the floodgates to ever-more detailed examinations of the vices in such varied contexts as medieval Christian psychology, anthropology, academic theology, literary and artistic endeavour, homiletic literature, and penitential practice. See Richard Newhauser, 'Introduction', in *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture: The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. by Richard Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2012), pp. 1–16.

[13] For the wider scholarly reappraisal of Dante's theology, see, for example, Robin Kirkpatrick's translation and theological commentary on the *Commedia* (published by Penguin in 2006, 2007, and 2008); edited volumes such as *Dante's Commedia: Theology as Poetry*, ed. by Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, ed. by Claire E. Honess and Matthew Treherne, 2 vols. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013); *Le teologie di Dante*, ed. by Giuseppe Ledda (Ravenna: Angelo Longo, 2015); and *Dante and Late Medieval Florence: Theology in Poetry, Practice and Society*, ed. by Simon Gilson, Claire Honess, and Matthew Treherne (Leeds: Peter Lang, forthcoming); and single-author studies such as John Took, *Conversations with Kenelm: Essays on the Theology of the 'Commedia'* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2013); and Vittorio Montemaggi, *Reading Dante's 'Commedia' as Theology: Divinity Realized in Human Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[14] In this respect, my research was influenced, in particular, by Barański's call to investigate Dante's intellectual formation. See Zygmunt G. Barański, *Dante e I segni: Saggi per una storia intellettuale di Dante* (Naples: Liguori, 2000); Zygmunt G. Barański, 'The Temptations of a Heterodox Dante', in *Dante and Heterodoxy: The Temptations of 13th Century Radical Thought*, ed. by Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 164–96; Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Dante and Doctrine (and Theology)', in Honess and Treherne (eds.), *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, I, pp. 9–64; and Zygmunt G. Barański, '(Un)orthodox Dante', in Honess and Treherne (eds.), *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, II, pp. 253–330. See also *Dante in Context*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and *The Cambridge Companion to Dante's 'Commedia'*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański and Simon Gilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[15] The lectures were published in revised form as chapters in *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, ed. by George Corbett and Heather Webb, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015, 2016, 2017).

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in the commentary and *lectura Dantis* traditions. My reading of three terraces of Dante's Purgatory 'horizontally' – as narrative structural units and as moral regions – opens up new perspectives on individual cantos, as well as on particular interpretative *cruces* within them, thereby complementing the 'vertical approach'.[16]

The book's argument is organised into three principal parts. In Part I, I present the poem as an ethical and political manifesto: Chapter 1 analyses the complex moral ordering of Dante's afterlife as a whole, while Chapter 2 reveals the dualistic political argument underpinning the surprising number of classical pagans and contemporary popes that we find there. In Part II, I reframe Dante's Purgatory in terms of distinctively Christian ethics: whereas Chapter 3 shows how Dante's Purgatory represents a process of Christian penance, satisfaction, and purification, Chapter 4 distinguishes Dante's own approach to moral theology from Aquinas's innovative reforms. The reframing of Dante's Christian ethics in Part II informs my detailed interpretation of three particularly significant vices and the three terraces of Purgatory devoted to them – pride (Chapter 5), sloth (Chapter 6), and avarice (Chapter 7) – in Part III.

Where some scholars, such as Cogan and Moevs, have tried to set out an overarching moral rationale for the *Commedia*, I argue, in Chapter 1, that Dante incorporates diverse ethical criteria for the three regions of the afterlife.[17] I analyse the complex moral structure of Hell, and argue that a broadly Aristotelian taxonomy of good and evil underpins even its seemingly anomalous, and theologically unorthodox, regions. I emphasise, then, a distinction between this philosophical account of ethics in Hell, and the pastorally oriented account of Christian ethics in Purgatory. Dante structures the seven terraces of Purgatory according to the scheme of the seven capital vices, a standard moral framework for medieval Christian

[16] Two recent *lecturae* series have highlighted the 'horizontal' dimension of the poem's narrative structure across canto units. The ongoing *Lectura Dantis Andreapolitana* (2009–) typically presents four lectures on four successive cantos in the course of a morning and an afternoon; see *Lectura Dantis Andreapolitana*, http://lecturadantisandreapolitana.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk. By comparison, *Esperimenti Danteschi* invited lecturers to consider narrative episodes across the poem; see *Esperimenti Danteschi: Inferno 2008*, ed. by Simone Invernizzi (Genova: Marietti, 2009); *Esperimenti Danteschi: Purgatorio 2009*, ed. by Benedetta Quadrio (Genova: Marietti, 2010); and *Esperimenti Danteschi: Paradiso 2010*, ed. by Tomasso Montorfano (Genova: Marietti, 2010). Neither project, however, considers moral structure as the determining narrative unit; thus, in *Esperimenti Danteschi*, the only lecture which coincides with a terrace of Purgatory is Giuseppe Polimeni, 'La "gloria della lingua": considerazioni di poetica nello snodo di *Purgatorio* x, xii, xii', in *Purgatorio 2009*, ed. by Benedetta Quadrio, pp. 105–33.

[17] See Cogan, *The Design in the Wax*; Christian Moevs, 'Triform Love: The Seven Deadly Sins and the Structure of the *Commedia*', in Barnes and O'Connell (eds.), *Dante*, pp. 11–46.

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confession. His invention of an antechamber to Purgatory, where souls who delayed their penance are temporarily deprived of the purifying pain of sense (*poena sensus*), further underlines the fact that Purgatory continues a process that should have begun in this life. The overarching moral theme of Paradise is Christian asceticism, and Dante overlaps a scientific belief in astral influence on human personality with the scheme of the four cardinal and three theological virtues.

In Chapter 2, I turn to the political dimension of Dante's ethical thought. Whereas critics have tended to emphasise 'the fundamental difference' between the ethical–political theories expounded in the *Monarchia* and the *Commedia*, I demonstrate their fundamental unity. Dante's theoretical insistence on the two ethical goals of humankind, the two political structures (Empire and Church) necessary for their pursuit, and the exclusive temporal power of the Empire and material poverty of the Church, lie behind – I argue – two of the most startling surprises in his depiction of the otherworld, in relation to previous traditions both popular and learned about the afterlife. First, of the approximately 300 characters in Dante's otherworld, 84 are pagans; 51 of these are located in a region entirely of Dante's own invention – the limbo of the virtuous pagans. Second, Dante depicts at least four contemporary popes in Hell.[18] No less than his Latin prose treatise in three books, Dante's vernacular poem in three canticles served as potent propaganda for the Imperial faction in Italy, and as a controversial manifesto for the radical reform of the Roman Church.

Especially in light of recent philological evidence that dates the *Monarchia* to circa 1317–1318 when most of the *Commedia* was already written, it is no longer sustainable to argue that the Latin prose treatise represents a formative stage in Dante's political theology, one intended to be left behind when he commenced work on his poetic masterpiece.[19] Nonetheless, those Dante scholars who have sought to read the *Commedia*

[18] See Alison Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 78.

[19] According to Prue Shaw, the date of the *Monarchia* is certainly no earlier than 1314; further contextual and historical arguments provided by Kay and Cassell imply a dating after 1316 and, most probably, 1317–1318. See Dante, *Monarchy*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. with commentary by Richard Kay (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), pp. xx–xxxi; Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieri's 'Monarchia', Guido Vernani's 'Refutation of the "Monarchia" Composed by Dante', and Pope John XXII's Bull 'Si fratrum'* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), pp. 3–49.

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as informed by the dualistic theory of the *Monarchia* have taken a wrong turn, as I argue in Chapter 3. In *Dante's Political Purgatory*, for example, John A. Scott claims that Dante's Purgatory represents an ethical journey guided by 'justice and the teachings of philosophy' towards the '*beatitudo huius vitae*'.[20] By contrast, I offer a way to read Dante's poem as informed by his dualistic theory without being drawn into a forced reading of Purgatory in overly political terms. I then show how Dante forged his vision of Purgatory through two areas of Christian theory and practice that had risen to particular prominence in the thirteenth century: the newly crystallised doctrine of Purgatory and the tradition of the seven capital vices (or deadly sins) in penitential ethics. Thus, Chapter 3 presents afresh a 'theological Purgatory' – a region that embodies an explicit re-orientation from natural to supernatural ethics, from pagan to Christian *exempla*, and from this world to the heavenly city. Dante's Purgatory represents, then, the Christian moral pilgrimage towards the *beatitudo vitae aeternae*. In considering Dante's Christian ethics, therefore, it is appropriate to focus our lens on the seven terraces of Purgatory.

In Chapter 4, I argue that even those scholars who have interpreted the ethics of Purgatory as distinctively Christian have typically turned to the wrong tradition of moral theology in order to do so. Almost without exception, scholars and commentators gloss Dante's approach to the seven capital vices through Aquinas (and especially the Aquinas of the *Summa theologiae*). However, Aquinas's reforms in moral theology were not, in fact, particularly influential in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. More influential, instead, was an older tradition of the vices represented by Aquinas's Dominican predecessor Peraldus (c. 1200–71). It is to this older tradition that Dante turns in constructing the seven terraces of Purgatory. While Siegfried Wenzel demonstrated the influence of Peraldus's rationale on the moral order of Purgatory, Dante scholars have not explored the implications of this important connection between Dante and Peraldus for a reading of the ethics of Purgatory as a whole.[21]

[20] Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 189. As Nicola Fosca highlights, in his recent commentary on the *Commedia* (2003–6), such a secular reading has become increasingly dominant and widespread. See Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XXVII, 103–8.

[21] Siegfried Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale for the Seven Deadly Sins (*Purgatorio* XVII)', *Modern Language Review* 60 (1965), 529–33. For partial studies of Dante and Peraldus, see Franco Mancini, 'Un *auctoritas* di Dante', *Studi danteschi*, 45 (1968), 95–119 (pp. 101–2); Carlo Delcorno, 'Dante e Peraldo', in *Exemplum e letteratura tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), pp. 195–227; Luca Azzetta, 'Vizi e virtù nella Firenze del Trecento (con un nuovo autografo del Lancia e una postilla sull' "Ottimo Commento")', *Rivista di Studi Danteschi* 8: 1 (2008), 101–42. The relative lack of critical attention to Peraldus may be due in part to the lack of a

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I demonstrate the major differences between Aquinas's and Peraldus's approaches. This comparative critique highlights the characteristics, including the weaknesses, of Dante's poetic treatment (which clearly follows Peraldus's treatise). I argue, moreover, that there is a compelling parallel between Peraldus's *De vitiis et virtutibus* and Dante's Purgatory and Paradise in terms of not only ethical content but also ethical form.

The third and fourth chapters lay the foundation, therefore, for Chapters 5–7, which draw significantly on Peraldus's treatise as a gloss for the Christian ethics of Dante's Purgatory. In Chapter 5, I reappraise Dante's relationship with his reader in *Purgatorio* through the interpretative paradigm of medieval preaching against vice. The terrace of pride is particularly interesting in this context, as the medieval church provides its implicit backdrop. The terrace's centrepiece is Dante-character's encounter with three prideful souls (*Purg.* XI, 37–142), and this encounter is framed by the three examples of humility (*Purg.* X, 34–93) and the twelve examples of pride (*Purg.* XII, 25–63). I interpret the three groups together as a triptych, arguing that Dante models a spiritual exercise of conversion from pride to humility in this terrace. As sinner and preacher, he invites his reader to reflect upon the three prideful souls identified (Omberto, Oderisi, and Salvani), and upon the three groups of prideful examples (delineated by the acrostic 'VOM') in counter-position with the three exempla of humility (Mary, King David, and Trajan). Dante's choice of exempla (which has puzzled critics) becomes understandable when, and only when, we interpret them in relation to each other in terms of his moral purpose for the terrace as a whole.[22]

Scholars have typically failed to appreciate the importance of the vice of sloth in Dante's biography, as well as its pervasive presence in his Christian moral vision. In Chapter 6, I demonstrate that Peraldus's treatise

critical edition (a semi-critical edition of the text in three volumes is currently under way; see the Peraldus Project: www.public.asu.edu/~rnewhaus/peraldus/). As there is currently no critical edition, my references to Peraldus's *De vitiis* are to William Peraldus, *Summae virtutum ac vitiorum*, ed. by Rodolpus Clutius (Paris, 1629), 2 vols., which is conveniently available online via Google Books. In this edition, the treatise on the virtues is printed first (as volume 1) and the treatise on the vices second (as volume 2); in contrast, in thirteenth-century manuscripts, the order is the reverse. I refer simply to Peraldus, *De vitiis*, and page references will be to the second volume of the Clutius edition. For ease of reference to other editions, I give references to the treatise [t.], part [pa.], and, where applicable, chapter [c.] of *De vitiis*, as well as to the pagination in this edition.

[22] For a summary of the various scholarly approaches to this venerable *crux*, see Fiorenzo Forti, 'Pusillanimi e superbi', in *Magnanimitade* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1977), pp. 207–26 (pp. 222–25). For a more up-to-date survey, see Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 61–63.

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'De acedia' profoundly influenced Dante's poetic representation of sloth. Peraldus opens up the depth and breadth of contemporary understandings of *acedia* enabling us to understand sloth as truly a scholar's and a poet's vice. There are, I suggest, two key narrative dramas in the terrace of sloth: the acute fervour of the penitent slothful and, framing this, Dante-character's intellectual zeal for knowledge. Virgil's three doctrinal lectures (XVII, 73–XVIII, 87) – on the moral structure of Purgatory, the nature of love, and free will and moral responsibility – are not parenthetical, therefore, to the terrace's drama. Furthermore, I argue that Virgil's doctrine is represented symbolically by the dream of the Siren at the close of the terrace (XVIII, 130–45 and XIX, 1–69). Using Peraldus as a gloss, I identify Dante's first sin in *Inferno* I as tepidity (the genus of sloth) and, even more precisely, as its subspecies of ignavia. It is particularly significant, then, that 'tepidity' (*Purg.* XXII, 92) is the post-conversion vice of Statius, Dante's poetic cypher.

In Chapter 7, I demonstrate the significance of avarice in Dante's Christian ethics, and in his own moral biography. As Peraldus's treatise 'De avaritia' demonstrates, the vice of avarice may include a disordered love of power and knowledge as well as of wealth, and its opposing vice of prodigality. In particular, *amor filiorum* [the love of children] is highlighted as a perilous occasion to avarice. I argue that *amor filiorum* is the interpretative key to Dante's terrace of avarice, which is structured chiastically around the figure of Hugh Capet (*Purg.* XX, 40–96). Scholars have typically interpreted Hugh Capet as simply a vehicle for Dante's political polemic, and have overlooked the profound spiritual dimension of the episode. From a theological perspective, however, Hugh Capet's confession at the heart of the canto is directly penitential. The examples of poverty (16–33) and avarice (97–123) all concern the impact of poverty on family dependents; the she-wolf (4–15) and the poor shepherds (124–41) emphasise the failure of the Church's pastors to protect their flock from avarice; the prologue (1–3) and the epilogue (142–51) concern the avaricious desire for knowledge. Hugh Capet's genealogy of ancestral line (*Purg.* XX) is, in turn, framed by the avaricious Ottobono dei Fieschi's genealogy of popes (*Purg.* XIX) and the prodigal Statius's genealogy of ethical poets (*Purg.* XXI–XXII). Through his carefully choreographed representation of Statius, Dante also implies that avarice (in its subspecies, and opposing vice, of prodigality) was his own vice, and the cause of his overthrow by the she-wolf in *Inferno* I.

While I provide an overview of all seven capital vices in Chapters 1 and 3, there are at least five good reasons for focusing in detail on pride, sloth,

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and avarice.[23] First, I seek to show the benefits of interpreting Dante's Purgatory through the narrative units of its moral structure, and providing such close readings required selection. Second, Dante gives special emphasis to these three vices in Purgatory. Pride and avarice are both 'root vices' (from which the other vices may spring), and Dante allots considerable space – three and three and a half cantos, respectively – to the two terraces devoted to them (*Purg*. x–xii; *Purg*. xix, 70–xxii, 114). The terrace of sloth, although shorter (*Purg*. xvii, 76–xix, 69), is structurally prominent as the mid-point of the poem, and the central terrace to which Dante assigns the exposition of the order of love upon which Purgatory is founded. Third, these three vices are representative of three different kinds of vice as categorised by human moral psychology: pride (with envy) is a vice of the intellect, sloth (with wrath) is a vice of the irascible appetite, and avarice (with gluttony and lust) is a vice of the concupiscible appetite. Fourth, Dante explicitly identifies pride as one of his own gravest vices (*Purg*. xiii, 133–38), while he implicitly identifies prodigality (the opposing vice of avarice) and sloth as key autobiographical vices through Statius, his poetic cypher. Finally, sloth and avarice are the twin vices that Dante associates especially with the moral corruption of the Church: in Dante's view, the spiritual sloth and worldly avarice of the clergy led to the confounding of the two swords of temporal and spiritual power, and to the consequent disorder of the world.

[23] Barnes and O'Connell's *Dante* provides illuminating chapters on each of the seven deadly sins in the *Commedia* as a whole, albeit from different methodological and scholarly perspectives. None of the chapters, however, provides a close reading of a particular terrace of Purgatory.

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PART I

Ethical and Political Manifesto

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CHAPTER 1

Dante's Ethical Agenda
Vital Nourishment

This chapter sets out – in overview – what I consider to be Dante's ethical agenda: his approach to the gradations of good and evil, to questions of happiness, and to the relationship between different pagan and Christian moral criteria. In the context of thirteenth-century debates about the relationship between reason and revelation, nature and grace, and moral and divine law, I maintain that Dante's approach is characterised by distinction and separation rather than by integration and subordination (the approach of Aquinas). I situate Dante's moral system in relation to those systems familiar to his medieval contemporaries, and underline those aspects which are particularly novel and, in some cases, surprising. I also argue that Dante employs different moral criteria for the three canticles, in contrast to the approach of scholars such as Cogan and Moevs, who seek one overarching moral rationale for the poem as a whole.[1] The moral structure of *Inferno* is highly complex and has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate and controversy. I argue that Virgil's rationale is coherent, effectively demarcating Hell's four principal categories of incontinence, violence, simple fraud, and treacherous fraud, even though it is also incomplete, leaving out the 'neutrals', the Limbo dwellers, and the heretics. These omissions are, I maintain, exceptions that prove the rule, reinforcing (rather than undermining) Dante's Aristotelian taxonomy. While the structure of Purgatory according to the seven capital vices might appear more straightforward, Virgil's lecture in Purgatory (as in Hell) leaves out the most theologically original parts of the canticle: the five groups of souls in Ante-Purgatory, and the Earthly Paradise. I analyse the rationale behind the moral regions of *Purgatorio*, as well as emphasising key differences between Infernal and Purgatorial suffering. In his vision of Paradise, instead of presenting a detailed rationale (as in the other two canticles), Dante places a more overarching emphasis, I suggest, on moral

[1] See Cogan, *The Design in the Wax*; Moevs, 'Triform Love', pp. 11–46.

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asceticism and mystic union with God, in opposition to the avarice and worldly corruption that the poet considered had infected Church and State. After a short consideration of the moral topography of Dante's afterlife as a whole, this chapter thus analyses the moral structure of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* in turn.

The Moral Topography of Dante's Afterlife

Dante projects the three realms of the medieval afterlife – Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise – onto the contemporary geocentric worldview (the Earth as the centre of the cosmos), thereby joining his moral vision to the macro history of salvation. He imagines that when Satan fell from Heaven, the Earth in the northern hemisphere recoiled in horror, creating the spiralling funnel of Hell.[2] This displaced mass of Earth then formed the conical mountain of Purgatory in the southern hemisphere. In this way, Dante shows how God even out of evil – Satan's rebellion and subsequent temptation of man – brings about good: the mountain provides sinful man with a way back to God. As the pilgrim descends into Hell, he encounters increasingly grave human evils until he reaches Satan at the Earth's exact centre. As he ascends the mountain of Purgatory, the sins he encounters decrease in gravity as he gets ever further from Satan and ever closer to God. Likewise, as he ascends through the nine heavenly spheres on his way to the Empyrean, he encounters blessed souls characterised by ever greater virtues and ever greater holiness. In short, Dante's poem follows a simple, moral-geographical law: to rise up is good; to sink down is bad.

Dante's moral vision is especially innovative in terms of its detailed and systematic ordering of saints and sinners. At a fundamental level, the number symbolism of three (the Trinity) and nine (Creation) seems to underpin the poem's moral structure. There are nine circles of Hell and, with the notable exceptions of circles 1 and 6, there are three main categories of evil: incontinence (circles 2–5), violence (circle 7), and fraud (circles 8 and 9). There are nine principle areas of Purgatory: the seven terraces that purge the seven capital vices (pride, envy, wrath, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust) are framed by the two regions of Ante-Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise. And there are nine heavens of Paradise, which are governed by the nine orders of angels. Although the

[2] Alison Morgan mistakenly situates Dante's mountain of Purgatory in the northern hemisphere (Morgan, *Dante*, p. 144).

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moral structure is less explicit in Paradise, Dante does seem to allude to the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) and the four cardinal virtues (prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance) in the first seven planetary spheres. Furthermore, Dante-character is examined on the three theological virtues in the eighth heaven of the fixed stars.

Topographical markers are further delineators of moral structure. These are particularly clear in Purgatory (the seven terraces of the mountain) and in Paradise (the planetary heavens). Due to the moral complexity of Hell, Dante divides up its multiple regions and sub-regions through a variety of topographical elements, drawing upon a great variety of sources – ranging from classical texts, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Statius's *Thebaid*, to Christian voyage and vision literature and preaching manuals of his time. Upper Hell (circles 1–5) is entered through a gateway; Lower Hell (circles 6–9) resides within the city of Dis. A steep cliff divides the sins of violence (circle 7) from the ten 'evil ditches' (malebolge) of simple fraud (circle 8), while a central well sets apart the treacherous (circle 9). Differing landscapes are used to subdivide regions. For example, a bloody river, a thorny wood, and a fiery desert segment the seventh circle of violence into violence against another, against self, and against God. Dante draws especially on Virgil's depiction of the pagan underworld (Hades) in *Aeneid* VI, transforming this material in ingenious ways. Thus he borrows four rivers to delineate groups of sinners: Acheron divides the anomalous 'neutrals' from the rest of the damned sinners (*Inf.* III); Styx contains the wrathful and the sullen (*Inf.* VII), Phlegethon the violent against others (*Inf.* XII), the icy lake of Cocytus the treacherous. Similarly, Dante transforms a host of mythological monsters to describe or nuance moral structure. For example, Dante gives Virgil's infernal judge Minos a monstrous tail that he grotesquely wraps around himself one to nine times depending on the circle of Hell allotted to a sinner's damnation (*Inf.* V, 4–12), and he transforms Geryon, with the face of a just man and the body of a serpent, into 'that foul image of fraud' ('quella sozza imagine di froda'; *Inf.* XVII, 7).

Dante's use of moral topography at the macro level of Hell's funnel or at the micro level of a ditch or river strongly suggests that he channelled his ethical agenda through his eschatological vision. Notably, however, Dante does not provide his reader with a map of the detailed moral schema that underpins his poem. Dante could have started his poem, after all, with a 'table of contents' outlining the moral structure of each of the three canticles, but he chose not to, deliberately withholding the kind of bird's-eye view provided by later commentators, especially in the

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Renaissance, and by introductory visual diagrams in modern editions of the poem. It is only one third of the way through Hell (*Inf.* XI), halfway through Purgatory (*Purg.* XVII), and two thirds of the way through Paradise (*Par.* XXII) that we find any gloss at all on the regions' moral structures. In life, we do not have the luxury of learning all the moral answers before we begin our own ethical journeys and we learn, more often than not, through our painful mistakes. Likewise, Dante's poem starts not with a neatly organised solution, but *in media res* with a moral crisis: 'Miserere di me' [Have pity on me] (*Inf.* I, 65). The reader, like Dante-character (Dante's depiction of himself as a character in the poem), must plunge into the darkness of evil, with only the shadowy presence of Virgil to act as a guide. In this way, Dante emphasises the messy process of moral life rather than a set of prescribed rules and he challenges us, as readers, to find our own ethical bearings. As Ezra Pound memorably remarked: 'Dante wrote his poems to MAKE PEOPLE THINK.'[3]

Given that this chapter will take perforce a bird's-eye view of the poem's moral structure, and draw out the ethical theory interspersed in the text, it is especially necessary to foreground that this is not, in fact, the reader's experience. We should be sensitive, in other words, to the way in which Dante progressively builds a moral structure into his poem, and to its narrative effects. So with this one important caveat in mind, let us turn to the moral structure of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.

Pagan Moral Authorities in Hell: Aristotle and Virgil

One of many interpretations of the three beasts that Dante-character encounters at the beginning of his journey – the leopard, the lion, and the she-wolf (*Inf.* I, 31–60) – is that they represent the basic tripartite moral structure of Dante's Hell: incontinence, violence, and fraud.[4] However, such symbolism is allusive at best, and the actual moral classification

[3] Ezra Pound, 'Hell', in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 204.

[4] In his summary of the various interpretations in the critical tradition, Cassell identifies four basic groupings: 'the first holds that the creatures represent the major lusts, desires, or temptations of men as identified in I John 2:16–17; the second that they symbolize corrupt and corrupting political entities in the society and times in which Dante lived; the third that they represent the sins most besetting the Florence of the time, pride, envy and lust, according to the censures of Brunetto Latini and Ciacco in *Inferno* VI, 74, and XV, 68; and the fourth that they represent internal besetting sins common to the wayfarer and all men, sins related to the dispositions or gradations of man's fall into sin, chiastically ordered to the three divisions of hell.' See Anthony K. Cassell, *Lectura Dantis Americana: Inferno I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), pp. 45–76 (p. 45).

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of the sins in Hell occurs only after Dante-character has left Upper Hell and entered the city of Dis. Without the benefit of scholarly diagrams and maps, the first readers of Dante's poem would have been initially bewildered and disoriented as surprise builds upon surprise: Dante's first moral guide is not an authoritative Christian saint, but rather the pagan poet Virgil (*Inf.* II, 61–136); the first group of sinners encountered (the 'neutrals') are unknown to medieval theology and entirely Dante's own invention (*Inf.* III, 21–69); and the first circle of Hell (Limbo) is radically revised by Dante to include the presence of virtuous pagans (*Inf.* IV, 67–151). Given that the second circle is devoted to lust (*Inf.* V), the third to gluttony (*Inf.* VI), the fourth to avarice and prodigality (*Inf.* VII), and the fifth to wrath (*Inf.* VII–VIII), the reader might naturally suppose that the seven deadly sins (or capital vices) is an ordering principle. Dante sets up this expectation only to frustrate it, however, for the system of the seven deadly sins then decisively breaks down. Sloth may be implicitly condemned as a counterpart to wrath (*Inf.* VII, 115–26).[5] But there is no circle dedicated to either envy or pride, despite these two remaining deadly sins being referenced alongside avarice in *Inferno* VI, 74.[6] Boccaccio first claimed that the opening of *Inferno* VIII – 'io dico seguitando' [Continuing, I have to tell] – represents Dante's return to writing after a decisive break, and some critics still suggest that Dante changed his mind about the moral structure of Hell in the process of writing.[7] It has been argued, for example, that Dante originally intended to embody envy in Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti and pride in Farinata, and only later salvaged the material in his

[5] As Dorigatti observes, Bonaventure connects sloth to wrath in this way in his *Compendium theologicae veritatis*: 'Ira, cum non potest se vindicare, tristatur, et ideo ex ea nascitur acidia' [When anger cannot avenge itself it turns to sadness, and in the process acedia is born]. In a nuanced treatment, however, Dorigatti argues that 'acedia' is described here only as an effect of wrath and not as cause: the 'accidioso fummo' derives from wrath's second aspect, of 'those whose anger boils inside them without finding any outlet'. See Marco Dorigatti, 'The Acid Test of Faith: Dante and the Capital Sin of Accidia (Sloth)', in Barnes and O'Connell (eds.), *Dante*, pp. 151–78 (p. 157 and pp. 160–66). However, for a strong argument in favour of identifying *acedia* here, as well as a bibliography on the *crux*, see also Jennifer Rushworth, 'Mourning and Acedia in Dante', in Jennifer Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning in Dante, Petrarch, and Proust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 18–53 (especially pp. 20–24).

[6] Even so, many scholars have attempted to fit the scheme of the seven capital vices onto the overall moral structure of the *Inferno*. For some clear arguments against this approach, see Edward Moore, 'The Classification of Sins in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*', in Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante: Second Series* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899; repr. 1968), pp. 152–209 (pp. 152–82).

[7] Almost all scholars now discount as a fable Boccaccio's claim that the first seven cantos were written before Dante's exile (1302). Nonetheless, Boccaccio's sense that Dante changed his mind about the ordering and structuring of the poem (which the fable may illustrate) is plausible if not – for me, at least – convincing.

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masterly creation of the canto of the Epicureans (*Inf.* x).[8] Dante, of course, ultimately deploys the scheme of the seven vices to structure Purgatory. Whether or not he originally intended to apply this scheme to Upper Hell, its suggestion there remains strong, providing interesting points of parallel and contrast with its later development in the second canticle.

The delayed classification of moral evil is presented after Dante and Virgil have left Upper Hell and entered the city of Dis.[9] Unable to descend further because of the horrible stench cast up by the abyss of Lower Hell, Dante and Virgil are forced to wait while they become accustomed to it. Virgil takes advantage of the time by finally explaining Hell's moral structure (*Inf.* xi, 16–66). Virgil makes a threefold distinction: first, between incontinence (Upper Hell) and malice (Lower Hell); second, between malice through violence (circle 7) and malice through fraud (circles 8 and 9); and third, between simple fraud like counterfeiting, which deceives a stranger who has no particular reason to trust us (circle 8), and treacherous fraud like betraying one's own mother or father, which deceives someone who has a special reason to trust us, thereby breaking a special bond of love (circle 9).

Many scholars have posited an inconsistency in Virgil's rationale that apparently derives from Dante's fusion of two sources. Where Cicero's *De officiis* i, 13 subdivides malice into violence and fraud (*Inf.* xi, 22–24), Aristotle's *Ethics*, vi, 1–6 distinguishes between incontinence, malice, and mad bestiality (*Inf.* xi, 79–84).[10] However, Virgil's rationale is arguably consistent.[11] On such an interpretation, the Ciceronian and Aristotelian

[8] See, most recently, Raffaele Pinto, 'Indizi del disegno primitivo dell'*Inferno* (e della *Commedia*): *Inf.* vii–ix?', *Tenzone. Revista de la Asociación Complutense de Dantología*, 12 (2011), 105–52. On Pinto's reading, Dante originally intended the *Inferno* to be just eleven cantos long, with the ninth canto devoted to envy, the tenth to pride, and the eleventh to treachery.

[9] In the literary conceit running through this canticle, Dante's *Inferno* follows Virgil's *Aeneid* just as Dante-character follows Virgil-character into Hell. The Sibyl digresses on the moral order of Tartarus in like manner (see *Aeneid* vi, 535–627).

[10] Cicero, *De officiis,* i. xiii, 41: 'Cum autem duobus modis, id est aut vi aut fraude, fiat iniuria.' Notably, Dante also makes the distinction between violence and fraud at *Conv.* iv, xi, 11: 'e quale buono uomo mai per forza o per fraude procaccerà?'; Aristotle, *Ethics*, vii, 1.1: 'Post haec autem dicendum aliud facientes principium, quoniam circa mores fugiendorum tres sunt species, malitia, incontinentia, et bestialitas.'

[11] Zygmunt G. Barański, by contrast, reacts against a tendency in the scholarship to iron out what he sees as the blatant deficiencies of Virgil's lecture. See Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Canto xi', in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis: Inferno*, ed. by Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 2003), pp. 151–63. Barański argues that, through Virgil's inconsistent and incomplete account, Dante deliberately exposes the limitations of not only reason but also faith to understand the complexity of evil and, thereby, implicitly critiques a form of Christian Aristotelianism confident in its rational, scientific presentation of truth (p. 159). See also Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Segni e struttura Canto XI', in Barański, *Dante e i segni*, pp. 127–46.

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usages of the term 'malice' (22 and 82) both map onto the region of Lower Hell as a whole; the Ciceronian subdivision between 'violence and fraud' differentiates circles 7 and 8; the Aristotelian 'mad bestiality' serves as a subcategory of the genus 'malice' to indicate extreme cruelty, thereby differentiating circles 8 and 9.[12] In this way, Virgil's rationale effectively demarcates the four main regions of Hell: the four circles of incontinence (circles 2–5) and the three 'rings' (*gironi*) of violence (circle 7) which make up the first half of Hell; the ten concentric Evil-pockets (*Malebolge*) of simple fraud (circle 8) and the pit of Cocytus consisting of four sub-circles of treacherous fraud (circle 9) which constitute the second half of Hell.[13]

The circles of incontinence follow the principle of 'counter-punishment' (contrapasso; *Inf.* XXVIII, 142) explicitly referenced by the Occitan poet Bertran de Born, according to which infernal suffering reflects the nature of the sin being punished. For Dante, human beings are rational animals: as incontinent sinners subject their reason to their desire (they know what the right moral action is but, despite this, do evil because of an overwhelming passion), they become – *in act* – like a beast or even like vegetative or inanimate matter: 'è morto [uomo], e rimaso bestia' (*Conv.* IV, vii, 14).[14] For the lustful sinners stripped of reason, the sensual pleasure of

Barański argues, moreover, that Virgil fails to identify the seven capital vices as influencing the moral structure of Upper Hell, and that this represents further evidence of his incapacity to appreciate the importance of Christian beliefs (Barański, 'Canto XI', p. 159).

[12] For this reading, I follow, in particular, Steno Vazzana, 'Dov'è la "matta bestialitade" (Ancora sulla struttura aristotelica dell'*Inferno*)', *L'Alighieri. Rassegna bibliografica dantesca*, 38 (1997), 95–108. Vazzana provides a helpful recension of opposing critical views, and emphasises that his own interpretation not only builds on the studies of Francesco Mazzoni and Cesare Vasoli, but also aligns with all the early commentators excepting Boccaccio. Vazzana's citation of Aquinas's commentary on the *Ethics* puts the case especially well: 'Bestialitas differt a malitia ... per quendam excessum circa eandem materiam et ideo ad idem genus reduci potest' [Bestiality differs from malice through some kind of excess with regard to the same matter and, therefore, is reducible to the same genus] (p. 102). Cogan's insistence on equating circles 2–5 with the concupiscent appetite, circles 6 and 7 with the irascible appetite, and circles 8 and 9 with the rational will leads him to align 'mad bestiality' with the violent and the heretics. Cogan recognises, however, that he can 'find no support in Aristotle's text [and] must accept it as a purely Dantean usage of the term *bestiality*' (Cogan, *The Design in the Wax*, pp. 293–94).

[13] Dante seems to consciously mark this binary division of the narrative of hell. *Inferno* XVIII begins: 'Luogo è in inferno detto Malebolge.'

[14] Pietro d'Alighieri cites Aquinas's commentary on the *Ethics*: 'Et sic, ut dicit ibi Commentator, incontinentia est dispositio praeter rectam rationem, et sic incontinens est qui scit se prava agere, sed propter passionem non consistit in ratione' (Pietro Alighieri [2], gloss to *Inf.* XI, 76–84). Drawing explicitly upon Aristotle's *De anima*, Dante employs the analogy of the three natures – vegetative, sensitive, and rational – being like a triangle within a square within a pentagon. If one takes away a side of a pentagon, it leaves only a square. Analogously, if one takes away reason, the soul is only sensitive: that is a brute animal (*Conv.* IV, vii, 14–16). See also Aquinas, *Sententia Ethic.*, VII. 1.1. n. 3: 'Si quidem igitur sit perversitas ex parte appetitus ut ratio practica remaneat recta, erit incontinentia, quae scilicet est, quando aliquis rectam aestimationem habet de eo quod est

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touch, shared by all animals, becomes their overpowering desire; in Hell, in keeping with medieval bestiary lore, they are consequently compared to birds buffeted by the wind (*Inf.* v).[15] For the gluttons, bodily nourishment necessary also to plant life becomes their overriding desire. In Hell, they appear human but in reality they have become indistinguishable from beasts and wallow in their own filth like dogs and pigs (*Inf.* vi).[16] The avaricious make material goods – the level of inanimate matter – their goal and become in Hell little better than the boulders they must endlessly push around (*Inf.* vii). Finally, according to the extent of their wrath, the sinners in the fifth circle are submerged by degrees in a river of blood (*Inf.* viii).

As Virgil clarifies (*Inf.* xi, 28–33), the seventh circle of violence is divided into three rings: violence against one's neighbour (*Inf.* xii), against oneself (*Inf.* xiii), and against God (*Inf.* xiv–xvii). Although modern commentators typically trace this triple division to Aquinas, Dante construes these categories in a markedly different way. For example, the classification 'sins against the self' includes, for Aquinas, the intemperate sins of gluttony and lust; in contrast, for Dante, it is restricted to wilful self-destruction (suicide or a squandering of one's own possessions). More convincing, in my view, is that these three victims of man's violence (neighbour, self, and God) are connected to the parallel victims of man's hatred in Virgil's corresponding lecture on the moral structure of Purgatory (*Purg.* xvii, 104–14). Virgil explains there that one cannot hate God directly because God is the necessary cause of our existence. One can rebel against God indirectly, however, insofar as our disordered will hates God's effects such as His supremacy or His prohibition of sins. In this way,

faciendum vel vitandum, sed propter passionem appetitus in contrarium trahit.' See also Pietro d'Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* xi, 76–90.

[15] As with the case of Francesca and Paolo – murdered by Gianciotto Malatesta (her husband and his brother, respectively) – it can also lead to disastrous personal and social consequences. Indeed, as Iannuci emphasises, adulterous love is presented as a root metaphor of cosmic discord in this canto. See Amilcare A. Iannucci, 'Forbidden Love: Metaphor and History (Inferno 5)', in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Amilcare A. Iannuci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 94–112: 'Paolo and Francesca's last trembling kiss, inspired by their reading of the romance of *Lancelot du Lac*, repeats at the level of chronicle a pattern inherent not only in literature but in history itself – a pattern whereby passion overwhelms reason and leads to self-destruction and social upheaval' (pp. 106–7).

[16] The glutton Ciacco similarly embodies the human tragedy of incontinent sin. The putrid infernal discharge raining down upon the gluttons in hell represents, in Boccaccio's reading, an amalgamation of vomit and scatological excretion (the undigested mixture of luxurious and excessive foods). Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.* vi, 94–96. Through intemperance, the souls fail, therefore, to realise their potential as human beings and are subsumed into ever-lower forms of natural life.

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violence against God is possible. Similarly, we cannot hate ourselves directly but we can do violence to ourselves. Thus, for example, we may misjudge as good something that is, in fact, evil, as when the suicide kills himself as a means to end misery and suffering.[17] From Virgil's lecture in Purgatory, therefore, we may understand why violence against self (our very existence) and violence against God (the origin of that existence) are – for Dante – not only possible but progressively more grave than violence against one's neighbour (who is outside our existence).

Virgil's threefold division of violence against God into blasphemy (*Inf.* XIV), sodomy (*Inf.* XV–XVI), and usury (*Inf.* XVII) in the third ring of violence (a sterile desert battered by a rain of fire) provokes Dante-character's puzzlement, however, and requires further comment (*Inf.* XI, 94–96). Citing Aristotle's *Physics* and, for further confirmation, the theological authority of Genesis, Virgil argues that Nature takes its course from the Divine Intellect, whereas human work takes its course from Nature. Where blasphemy scorns God directly, the sexual act of sodomy disdains the principle of fertility in Nature and, consequently, indirectly scorns God. Usury – the lending of money on interest – scorns Nature because, as Aristotle argued, it is unnatural that money should beget money (*Politics* 1.10).[18] It also derides man's work because the creditor does not add value, but instead receives something (the interest) for nothing (the original sum of money is returned risk free).[19]

[17] The examples of blasphemy and suicide are not, then, counter-examples to the rationale in Purgatory (as Hollander suggests). See Hollander, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 106–11: 'The first consequence of this doctrine is to remove two possible motivations from consideration: hatred of self or hatred of God, both of which are declared to be impossible. Singleton (comment on vv. 109–11) points out that sinners like Capaneus (*Inf.* XIV) and Vanni Fucci (*Inf.* XXV) indeed do demonstrate a hatred for God, a feeling possible only in hell, but not in this life on Earth. The sins of suicide and blasphemy, however, surely seem to contradict this theoretical notion.'

[18] See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.10.1258b, where usury is described as absolutely contrary to nature ('maxime praeter naturam'; cited in *DE*, p. 848). See also Aquinas's commentary to the *Physics* (*Exp. Polit.* 1.8.134): 'For this reason the acquisition of money is especially contrary to Nature, because it is in accordance with nature that money should increase from natural goods and not from money itself' (cited in *DE*, p. 848). See also Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* XI, 94–111: 'offendit enim primo naturam in eo quod non est naturae ut denarius pareat et generet alium denarium sine corruptione sui, cum ipsa natura, ut ait Phylosophus, velit quod corruptio unius sit generatio alterius.'

[19] See Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 13, a. 4, co. In practising usury, the creditor, according to Aquinas, either sells nothing or sells the same thing twice: the very money whose use consists in its consumption. It is like, in Aquinas's analogy, selling a bottle of wine *and* selling the use of the bottle of wine, as if these were two different things. With a house, it is natural that someone might own it but another pay to use it (through rent); conversely, it is not conceivable for someone to own a bottle of wine and another simultaneously to use it (through its use, the wine is consumed, and ceases to exist and be possessed by the owner).

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Of the three forms of violence against God, Dante devotes the most space – two cantos (*Inf.* XV–XVI) – to sodomy, a sin which scholars of this episode have typically equated with homosexuality.[20] There are, however, problems with this characterisation.[21] Male–male sodomy in Dante's Florentine context appears to have been predominantly pederastic, and defined in terms of active (elder male) and passive (young male) partners, rather than in terms of sexual orientation or mutual reciprocity.[22] According to contemporary penitentials, moreover, men could sin in different ways, and with women as well as with other men, 'against nature'.[23] Pietro d'Alighieri's commentary on the third rung of sodomy, for example, draws extensively on Peraldus's treatment of the *peccatum contra naturam*.[24] Peraldus emphasises that the sin against nature can be according to the substance (*ad substantiam*) or according to the position (*ad modum*).[25] Anal or oral sex is against nature *ad substantiam* because semen is not ejaculated into the appropriate place.[26] Peraldus considers anal or oral sex between a man and a woman worse even than incest, and

[20] Dante scholars commonly use the terms 'sodomy' and 'homosexuality' interchangeably (see, for recent examples, the commentaries by Hollander, Durling-Martinez, Barolini, and Fosca). Indeed, this is the case even with those scholars who have argued – wrongly, in my view – that Brunetto's sin is not sodomy at all but his alleged denial of the mother tongue (see André Pézard, *Dante sous la pluie de feu* [Paris: Vrin, 1950]) or his Republicanism (see Richard Kay, *Dante's Swift and Strong: Essays in 'Inferno'* XV [Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978]; Richard Kay, 'The Sin(s) of Brunetto Latini', *Dante Studies*, 112 [1994], 63–75).

[21] See Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 7–8: 'most [scholars] would agree that to label anyone in the past who had sex with someone of the same sex as "a homosexual" would be to impose a modern category . . . medieval people did not draw the line between gay and straight, but between reproductive and non-reproductive sex.' Over the last thirty years, there has been a significant increase in scholarship on medieval sexuality. For the implications of this research for our understanding of the *peccatum contra naturam*, see pp. 157–95 in Karras's book; for an introduction to the burgeoning field of scholarship in this area, see 'Further Reading' in the same book, pp. 206–25.

[22] The early commentators refer anecdotally to male sodomy as pederastic. Although there is no extant legal evidence for early fourteenth-century Florence, the Florentine Office of the Night (1432–) records 83 per cent of passive partners as between thirteen and eighteen years of age, and only 3 per cent as older than age twenty (Karras, *Sexuality*, p. 179). According to Karras: 'While mutuality may not be the reality in many sexual relationships today, it is taken by many as the ideal, and sex is commonly thought of as something done by a couple, not as something done by one person to another (although indeed this is not the case in all contemporary subcultures). The line between active and passive partner in the Middle Ages was very sharp, and closely related to gender roles. To be active was to be masculine, regardless of the gender of one's partner, and to be passive was to be feminine. This does not mean, however, that all medieval sexuality was "heterosexualised": the pattern of active/masculine and passive/feminine was a matter of role, not of object choice' (p. 27).

[23] See Karras, *Sexuality*, especially pp. 20, 92, 172–73.

[24] See Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* XV–XVI.

[25] Peraldus, *de vitiis*, t.iii, pa. 2, ch. 2, p. 20a.

[26] Ibid.: 'est contra naturam ad substantiam, ut cum quis procurat vel consentit, ut semen alibi quam in loco ad hoc deputato effundatur'.

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most hateful in a wife ('in uxore').[27] Vaginal sex is against nature *ad modum* if a woman is on top of the man ('ut cum mulier supergreditur') or if a man enters, like a beast, from behind ('vel cum sit bestiali modo illud opus').[28] There are arguably, then, two groups of sodomites in this ring of Hell: male–male (*Inf.* XV) and male–female (*Inf.* XVI). The first group comprise 'cherchi / e litterati grandi' [clerks and great men of letters] (XV, 106–7), most notably Brunetto Latini, and commentators have speculated that Dante may be reflecting – in this episode – on having been the object, in his youth, of the elder Brunetto's sexual advances.[29] There is only a single and allusive one-line reference to the sin of sodomy in *Inferno* XVI: 'la fiera moglie più ch'altro mi nuoce' [my fierce wife harms me more than anything else] (45). It seems plausible that Dante may be playing here, in the tradition of *nomen significans rei*, with the Latin etymology of the man and woman in question: Iacopo Rusticucci ('Iacopo Rusticucci fui') really was 'rusticus' [rustic, rural] with his 'fera uxor' [bestial, savage wife].[30] We should not be surprised, moreover, that Dante's references to such sins against nature are allusive, both because

[27] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 20b: 'Sed omnium horum pessimum est quod contra naturam sit: ut si vir membro mulieris non ad hoc concesso utatur. Hoc execrabiliter sit in meritrice, sed execrabilius in uxore.'

[28] Ibid. In both positions, nonetheless, semen is ejaculated, in Peraldus's words, into the appropriate vessel ('tamen in vase debito').

[29] See, for example, Durling, *Inferno*, p. 245: 'If we interpret the episode as a veiled account of the relation between Dante and Brunetto, its implication would seem to be: Dante and Brunetto met going in opposite directions both on the arc of life and in relation to salvation: Brunetto was sexually attracted to Dante, and Dante perhaps to him (line 23 . . .); Dante rejected Brunetto's advances, however.' See also 'Dante and Homosexuality' (pp. 559–60). Early commentators note that pederastic practices were rife in the school room (see, for example, Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* XV, 110–14), underlying Dante's particular association of sodomitic practices with clerics and literary men. Boswell argues that the sodomites in Hell 'were probably associated in Dante's imagination with the seduction of minors or those in their care: they were teachers of grammar, scholars, clerics. (Perhaps Dante himself had been the object of Latini's affections?)' See John E. Boswell, 'Dante and the Sodomites', *Dante Studies*, 112 (1994), 63–76 (p. 71).

[30] Peraldus notes that women, in a frenzy, abused men by mounting them' (Peraldus, *de vitiis*, t.iii, pa. 2, ch. 3, p. 20b: 'quod mulieres in vesaniam versae supergressae viris abutebantur'). Maramauro, for example, glosses 'la fiera moglie' (45) in this sense of sodomy *ad modum* (Maramauro, gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 40–45: 'la sua dona luxuriosa; la quale ultra el modo licito volea che so marito usasse con lei: e però dice "La fiera"'). The other early commentators typically interpret this to mean either that Iacopo Rusticucci was led to sodomy with young men by his wife, or that she led him to sodomy *ad substantiam* with her. For the male–male interpretation, see, for example, Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 43–45, and Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 43–45. For the male–female interpretation, see, for example, Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 34–45; and Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 37–45. The codice cassinese divides the sinners against nature into: male–male, human–beast, and male–female (sodomy *ad substantiam*). See Codice cassinese, gloss to *Inf.* XVI, 1. For a further division of the sodomites into four different groups – male–male, female–female, male–female, and human–beast – see Boccaccio, gloss to *Inf.* XV, 115–18.

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this sin was seen as unspeakable and because, in nonetheless speaking of it, one might give others the occasion to sin.[31]

Virgil allots only a single *terzina* to the ten species of simple fraud (circle 8): 'hypocrisy, flattery, divining, impersonators, theft and simony, panders, barrators, and like filth' (ipocresia, lusinghe e chi affatura, / falsità, ladroneccio e simonia, / ruffian, baratti e simile lordura; *Inf.* XI, 58–60).[32] Virgil's list is in no apparent order, and it omits two sins altogether.[33] Is this accidental? Is it just for convenience of versification and rhyme? Does Dante, at this point of writing, not have a clear plan of how he will structure *Malebolge*? Whatever the reason, there is a clear narrative effect: the reader must discover those sins unnamed by Virgil – the counsellors of fraud (eighth *bolgia*) and the sowers of scandal and schism (ninth *bolgia*) – as well as the respective gravity of the sins enumerated.[34] Moreover, perhaps Dante seeks to stress the generic effect of simple fraud, which offends against the natural bond of love between human beings, rather than its degrees (notably, no more detailed rationale is given).[35] In this light, it is striking that half of Dante's *Inferno* (cantos XVIII–XXXIV) is concerned

[31] Peraldus, *de vitiis*, t.iii, pa. 2, ch. 2, p. 20a: 'De quo vitio cum magna cautela loquendum est in praedicando, et interrogationes in confessionibus faciendo, ut nihil hominibus reveletur quod illis praestet occasionem peccandi'; Ibid., ch. 3, p. 21b: 'quod ineffabile est et non debet homo loqui de peccato isto'. See also Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* XV, 101–14: 'nam dicit Simmacus quod "De hoc scelere fornicationis contra naturam homo non debet loqui", unde etiam Ieronimus dicit quod "Sodoma interpretatur muta"'.

[32] The early commentators gloss 'falsità' as falsifiers of things or words. For example, see Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 55–60: 'falsità, idest falsatores metallorum, mercium et aliarum rerum'; Anonimo Selmiano, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 58–60: 'La prima parte di frode dividi in nove parti: l'una parte sono lusinghieri, e ingannatori di femine, e ruffiani con false parole: la seconda parte si è simonia; la terza si è indovinatori; la quarta si è baratteria; la quinta si è ipocresia; la sesta si è ladronia; la settima si è scherani frodolenti; l'ottava si è commettitori di scandali; la nona si è falsatori di parole e di moneta.' Giovan Battista Gelli, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 55–60, by contrast, sees the 'falsi' as referring to the false counsellors, and therefore asserts that the 'falsitori' and 'seminatori di scandoli' are omitted: 'Delle quali dieci specie ei ne nomina nel testo otto per i loro nomi proprii, e questi sono gl'ippocriti, lusinghieri, maliardi, falsi consiglieri, ladri, simoniaci, ruffiani e barattieri; e due sotto questo nome generale *e simile lordura*, cioè bruttezza e scelerità, e questi sono i seminatori di scandoli e i falsatori.' See also Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 58–60, for glossing 'lusinghe' as 'ingannatori'.

[33] See also the list in *Conv.* I, xii, 10: 'tradimento, ingratitudine, falsitade, furto, rapina, inganno e loro simili. Li quali sono . . . inumani peccati'.

[34] See, for example, Alessandro Vellutello, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 52–60: 'i falsi consiglieri, et i seminatori de' scandali, che non nomina: ma di tutti vedremo ne' propri luoghi.'

[35] See P. Gioachino Berthier, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 56–60. This is the 'universale religione dell'umana specie' (*Conv.* IV, iv, 6): the 'naturale amistà, per la quale tutti a tutti semo amici' (*Conv.* III, xi, 7), because 'ciascun uomo a ciascun uomo è naturalmente amico' (*Conv.* I, i, 8). See also Giacomo Poletto, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 55–60. Theodore J. Cachey suggested the moral 'flatness' of the *Malebolge* in a Cambridge–Leeds–Notre Dame (USA)–Rome video conference on *Inferno* XXII (12 February 2015). He gives a helpful analysis of the structure of the *Malebolge*, in Theodore J. Cachey, 'Cartographic Dante', *Italica*, 87 (2010), 3, pp. 325–54.

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with the sin of fraud, whether simple (circle 8) or treacherous (circle 9). The moral weighting of *Inferno* arguably reflects Dante's profound concern with the way in which fraud perverts human reason, and its expression through language.[36] Furthermore, all the sins of fraud undermine the very foundations of civil society, as Pietro d'Alighieri's gloss to *Inferno* XI, 52–60 highlights with its references to Aristotle's *Politics* and to Justinian's code (the *Corpus Juris Civilis*).[37] In the last pocket of *Malebolge*, this is emphasised by the punishment of the falsifiers. For their corruption of the 'body politic' through alchemy, impersonation, counterfeiting (especially of coinage), and lying, they must suffer eternally four horrific diseases – leprosy, insanity, dropsy, and a raging fever – in their own individual bodies. The social–political dimension of Dante's moral structure is reinforced in the pit of Cocytus (circle 9), where treachery is punished in four sub-circles: Caina (treachery to kin), Antenora (treachery to country), Ptolomea (treachery to guests), and Judecca (treachery to lords and benefactors). Dante considered it worse, in other words, to betray one's lord than to betray members of one's own family.

Although Virgil's rationale for the moral structure of Hell delineates the four principal regions of Hell that take up thirty of *Inferno*'s thirty-four cantos, it strikingly leaves out Hell's first section, where the 'neutrals' reside, and which lies inside the infernal gate but outside the circles of Upper Hell (*Inf.* III); Virgil's own eternal resting place, the Limbo of the virtuous pagans within the first circle (*Inf.* IV); and the very area in which Virgil gives his lecture, the sixth circle of heresy (*Inf.* X–XI).[38] In a literal sense, these three categories are theological rather than philosophical, they do not concern moral evil as such, and they are not intelligible in pagan or purely rational terms. In an allegorical sense, however, these daringly original regions of Dante's Hell are the exceptions that prove the rule, and arguably reinforce the Aristotelian taxonomy underpinning the moral structure of Hell as a whole.

The neutrals, who pursued neither good nor evil, may correspond to Aristotle's category of the pusillanimous 'who omit to do what they could': the river Acheron, on this reading, divides sins of omission (*Inf.* III)

[36] As Barański has demonstrated, Dante succeeds in integrating nineteen out of twenty-four of the 'sins of the tongue' listed in Peraldus's preaching manual *De vitiis* in *Malebolge*. Zygmunt G. Barański, *Language as Sin and Salvation: A Lectura of 'Inferno' 18* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 36–37, n. 46.

[37] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* XI, 52–60.

[38] Ludovico Castelvetro, gloss to *Inf.* XI, 22–66, is extremely critical of the moral structure of Dante's Hell, particularly with regard to his classification of sodomy and usury as 'arti contro natura'.

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from sins of commission (*Inf.* IV–XXXIV).[39] Aquinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* makes the general distinction between, on the one hand, those who turn away from the good (*retrahunt a bene agendo*) and do not try to achieve good deeds (*absque conatu ad bonas operationes*) and, on the other hand, those inclined to evil doing (*inclinatur ad male agendum*). The first are the pusillanimous 'who omit to do what they could'. The second are evildoers in two ways: the incontinent (*incontinentes*) are enslaved to the senses and do harm to themselves (*in propriam deordinationem*), while the unjust (*injusti*) do evil to others (*mala faciunt aliis*).[40] Thus Dante's 'neutrals' correspond to Aristotle's pusillanimous: they are not evil doers ('male-factores'), as they sin through omission. For this reason, even in this figurative sense, the pusillanimous do not fit into Virgil's lecture, which divides sins of commission into incontinent sin and injustice or malice (with its subspecies 'mad bestiality'). In essence, this more generic schema accounts for the sins of omission punished on the near side of the river of Acheron and reaffirms the binary division of sins of commission into incontinent sin (punished in upper Hell beyond the river) and injustice (punished in the City of Dis).[41]

Although the pusillanimous make sense in terms of Aristotelian ethics, they certainly do not in terms of orthodox theology. Indeed, Dante's invention of the neutral souls who pursued neither evil nor good and are grouped with a third order of angels that followed neither God nor Satan sorely disturbed the early commentators.[42] But through this peculiar category, Dante emphasises figuratively the precious gift of free will: he affirms the imperative to actively seek and do good, rather than sitting on

[39] See *Ethics,* III, 1. 12, and 1. 13 (cited in Giovanni Busnelli, *L'Etica Nicomachea e l'ordinamento morale dell'Inferno di Dante* [Bologna: Zanichelli, 1907], p. 14).

[40] Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum,* III. 1. 12 n. 4.

[41] As Kenelm Foster notes, *malizia* [malice] – punished in Lower Hell – 'is virtually injustice in the widest sense of the term'. See Kenelm Foster, *The Two Dantes, and Other Studies* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p. 5. See also Busnelli, *L'Etica Nicomachea*, pp. 14–16.

[42] Guido da Pisa notes that, although this is against the Catholic faith – because Christ in the Gospel says, 'Who is not with me, is against me' – the poet should not be condemned because he is speaking poetically and not theologically in this section ('Et quamvis hoc sit contra fidem catholicam, quia Christus in Evangelio ait: "Qui non est mecum, contra me est", sustinendus est iste poeta et non damnandus, quia poetice et non theologice loquitur in hac parte'; Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* III, 34–42). Foster notes that Dante's 'very characteristic contempt for the neutrals, for the inert "who never were alive", . . . led to three lines (37–9) of rather queer theology' (Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 4). Maritain suggests that '[Dante's] poetry was able freely to play even with its tenets, and to fancy, without deceiving anybody, that condition of the "neither rebellious nor faithful" rejected both by heaven and by hell, which theology does not know' (Jacques Maritain, 'The Three Epiphanies of Creative Intuition', in Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1953], pp. 354–405 [p. 380]).

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the fence like the apathetic neutrals who 'never really lived' (*Inf.* III, 64) and die despised alike by God and the Devil. Thus, for Dante, Celestine – whose sin of omission was to give up the Papal mantle ('il gran rifiuto') – does not even deserve to be named (58–60). In contrast, his successor Boniface, still alive at the fictional date of the poem, will be memorably named (*Inf.* XIX, 53) – though, ironically, mistaken for Dante – for his many sins of commission in that office. Celestine's 'viltade', moreover, recalls Dante's 'viltade' (*Inf.* II, 45), which, Virgil says, holds him back from the honourable endeavour ('onrata impresa') of his journey and, at a figurative level, of writing the *Commedia* itself.[43]

The neutral souls who had a choice but did not use it also throw into relief the tragic predicament of the limbo dwellers. The unbaptised infants and virtuous pagans are not morally evil (they contract original sin but commit no personal sin) but, from a theological perspective, they are damned (denied the beatific vision) because, through no apparent fault of their own, they did not have access to the fruits of the Incarnation. As with the neutrals, Dante's purpose is, I would suggest, primarily figurative: the virtuous pagans represent in the afterlife a secular human happiness attainable through natural (rather than distinctively Christian) ethics. In the first circle of Hell, the exceptional virtue of the pagans (*Inf.* IV) may inversely parallel the exceptional degree of vice of the treacherous souls in the ninth circle (the pit of Cocytus). Indeed, Aristotle counterpoises incontinence with continence, malice with virtue, and extreme malice (or bestiality) with a rare superhuman level of virtue; Aristotle's example of the latter is Hector, who is also named by Dante alongside Aeneas in Limbo (*Inf.* IV, 122).[44]

Furthermore, where heresy (*Inf.* X–XI) is, conventionally at least, a specifically Christian sin, Dante singles out for special treatment the 'Epicureans' (*Inf.* X): remarkable for their political and intellectual prowess, they are punished for denying the immortality of the soul rather than for

[43] See Aquinas, *Com. Eth.*, Iv. 1. 11; II–II, q. 133, a.1. See also *Conv.* I, ii (cited in Busnelli, *L'Etica Nicomachea*, p. 20).

[44] Aquinas's interpretation of Aristotle's 'super-excellent virtue' is particularly interesting as a point of comparison with Dante. Like Dante, Aquinas follows Aristotle in seeing bestiality as directly opposed not to clemency but to a super-excellent virtue and in noting that the Philosopher called this super-excellent virtue 'heroic or divine'. But Aquinas goes further than Dante's limbo of the virtuous pagans would allow: he interprets this 'heroic and divine' level of virtue in Christian terms as a gift of the Holy Spirit and, more specifically, as the gift of piety. See Aquinas, *STh.*, IIaIIae, q. 159, a. 2, ad. 1: 'Saevitia vel feritas continetur sub bestialitate: unde non directe opponitur clementiae, sed superexcellentiori virtuti, quam Philosophus vocat heroicam vel divinam, quae secundum nos videtur pertinere ad dona Spiritus Sancti. Unde potest dici quod saevitia directe opponitur dono pietatis.'

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any strictly moral fault.[45] Moreover, the 'spiriti magni' of limbo (IV. 117) arguably find a counterpart in Farinata, who is given the Aristotelian epithet 'magnanimo' (a great-souled one).[46] The distinctive aspects of the three theological regions omitted from Virgil's account are further evidence, therefore, of the Aristotelian ethical framework of Hell overall: the neutrals may embody pusillanimity; the virtuous pagans, heroic virtue; and the Epicureans, a human secular virtue without faith.

Ordering Disordered Love in Purgatory: Augustine and Peraldus

Where visual depictions of the sufferings of Hell and the rewards of Paradise saturated the medieval imagination, Dante's poetic depiction of the afterlife places Purgatory as its literary and topographical centre. Dante gives equal weight to Purgatory, dedicating a canticle to *Purgatorio* (33 cantos) as well as to *Inferno* (34 cantos) and *Paradiso* (33 cantos). Moreover, he transports the region of Purgatory from its traditional location as an ante-chamber of Hell to its own, independent location in the southern hemisphere. Dante's Purgatory is given equal structural weight as well: the nine regions of Purgatory balance the nine circles of Hell and the nine heavens of Paradise. In addition, the three main partitions of Purgatory – Ante-Purgatory, the seven terraces of Purgatory (purging the seven capital sins), and the Earthly Paradise – are structural counterweights to the three main categories of moral evil in Dante's Hell: incontinence (circles 2–5), violence (circle 7), and fraud (circles 8 and 9).

There are, however, four key differences between Infernal and Purgatorial suffering. First, whereas Hell punishes sins or evil actions, Purgatory purges vices or evil habits. The seven capital vices are 'seven springs' from which 'all the deadly corruptions of souls emanate'.[47] Second, whereas corporeal suffering is unredemptive in Hell, it has a twofold purpose in Purgatory: according to its intensity, it punishes a sinner's guilt and, according to its duration, it corrects a sinner's vicious dispositions. Third, although all souls not in Paradise experience a lack of the divine vision (*poena damni*), this deprivation is perpetual in Hell but

[45] On the problems of classing Epicurus, and Epicureanism, as a heresy, see George Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus: A Dualistic Vision of Secular and Spiritual Fulfilment* (Oxford: Legenda, 2013), pp. 85–86, n. 1.

[46] For Aristotle on magnanimity, see Fiorenzo Forti, 'Il limbo dantesco e i megalopsichoi dell'Etica nicomachea', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 138 (1961), 329–30. See also John A. Scott, *Dante magnanimo: studi sulla Commedia* (Florence: Olschki, 1977).

[47] Peter Lombard, II *Sent.*, d. 42, c. 6, in Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, trans. by Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008), p. 210.

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only temporary in Purgatory. Fourth, whereas evil is punished principally in accordance with natural ethics in Hell, the completely different moral order of Christian holiness emerges in Purgatory: 'qui si rifà santa' [here they make themselves holy again] (*Purg.* XXIII, 66). Dante's treatment of wrath, avarice, gluttony, and lust is essentially different, therefore, in Hell and in Purgatory. For example, gluttony is punished in Hell as the failure of reason to moderate the appetite. By contrast, on the mountain of Purgatory (at the exact antipodes of Jerusalem, the place of Christ's crucifixion), the gluttonous souls' extreme fasting – their faces become dark, hollow, and wasted, and their eye sockets like rings without gems (22–33) – leads to spiritual union with Christ (70–75).

The moral structure of Purgatory is only articulated in its central (fourth) terrace (*Purg.* XVII), and at the centre of the poem as a whole. Dante-character and Virgil arrive at the terrace of sloth at nightfall. As the mountain cannot be climbed without the light of the sun (symbolically without the grace of God), they are forced to wait. As in the corresponding episode in *Inferno* XI, Virgil makes the time profitable by explaining the region's moral structure. Its foundation is the universal relationship of love between the Creator and His creation: 'Né creator né creatura mai ... figliuol, fu sanza amore' [neither Creator nor creature ..., my son, was ever without love] (*Purg.* XVII, 91–92). Virgil distinguishes between two principal kinds of love: natural love and love of the mind ('naturale o d'animo'; 93). Natural love is shared throughout the order of creation: it is the love that makes any material body fall to the earth, fire to ascend, a plant to grow, or an animal to move towards food. As it is predetermined, this natural love is always without error. By contrast, rational love ('d'animo'), which specifies humans as 'rational animals', is subject to free will. As an elective force, this rational love may err, and such disorder is vice. For this reason, love is the seed not only of every human virtue, but also of every human action that deserves punishment (*Purg.* XVIII, 103–5). The function of Christian ethics, then, is the reordering of human love. As Augustine emphasises, 'a brief and true definition of virtue is "rightly ordered love". That is why, in the holy Song of Songs, Christ's bride, the City of God, sings, "Set charity in order in me"' (*De civ. Dei*, XV, 22).[48] Everything must be loved, including the self, insofar as it is ordered to God.

[48] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. by Bernardus Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb (Turnholt: Brepols [Corpus Christianorum Series Latina], 1955), XV, xvii, 29–35, p. 488: 'Creator autem si veraciter ametur, hoc est si ipse, non aliud pro illo quod non est ipse, ametur, male amari non potest. Nam et

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To describe this disordered love in terms of the seven capital vices, Dante adopts the moral framework provided by the Dominican friar William Peraldus (c. 1200–71) in his treatise on the vices (*De vitiis*).[49] Dante divides disordered love into two main categories: love of an evil and perverted love of a good through excess or deficiency (*Purg.* XVII, 94–96). The evil loved must be directed against one's neighbour (106–14), as humans necessarily love their own existence and God as the cause of that existence. Dante defines pride, envy, and anger, therefore, as different ways by which we may hate our neighbour. The proud hope for excellence through the humiliation of others (115–17). The envious fear to lose their power, honour, or fame through the success of others, so they desire that others be brought low (118–20). The angry, because of some injury, are desirous of revenge and are ready to harm their neighbour (121–23). What, then, about the disordered love of the good? The unmeasured love by deficiency ('per poco di vigore'; 96) is the quiddity of sloth: the distinctive failure sufficiently to love God, the greatest good. Unmeasured love by excess ('per troppo . . . di vigore'; 96) is the genus of the three final vices of avarice, gluttony, and lust (136–39). Peraldus's schema thereby enables Dante to adopt both an Augustinian theory of sin as disordered love *and* the popular moral framework of the seven capital sins.[50]

Dante uses the noun 'Purgatory' (*Purgatorio; Purg.* VII, 39; IX, 49) only to refer to the seven terraces of the mountain (*Purg.* X–XXVII), and Virgil's

amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus qua vivitur bene. Unde mihi videtur, quod definitio brevis et vera virtutis ordo est amoris; propter quod in sancto cantico canticorum cantat sponsa Christi, civitas Dei: *Ordinate in me caritatem*.'

[49] Siegfried Wenzel convincingly demonstrates the influence of William Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis* on Dante's rationale for the seven deadly sins; see Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', 529–33. Prior to Wenzel's study, no source had been found for Dante's rationale (which was deemed his own innovation). Wenzel shows that Dante's rationale is found in Peraldus, and that Dante's son Pietro unmistakeably draws on Peraldus's rationale in his first commentary to the apposite passsage (*Purg.* XVII, 91–138). Although Dante may have come across Peraldus's treatment second-hand ('the material which Peraldus had collected was soon used and propagated by authors of Latin and vernacular manuals on the sins and on confession'), it seems that Peraldus's treatise was well diffused in Florence: it was one of the 'two wellsprings . . . of Dominican practical or moral theology' (p. 532). One might reasonably object that Dante does not at any point in his writings identify Peraldus as a source. There are two good, albeit provisional, responses to this argument. First, Pietro d'Alighieri similarly never refers to Peraldus by name; and yet, as established by Wenzel and as I demonstrate with further substantial evidence in Chapters 4–7 especially, he *must* be using Peraldus's treatise. Second, one can highlight that Peraldus's works did not circulate under his name, for Peraldus referred to himself as 'I, the smallest one of the order of the preaching friars'.

[50] Although Dante adopts Augustine's theory of love and its disorder, he takes a very different approach to Augustine's two cities. Where, for Augustine, the earthly city is created by love of self, extending even to contempt of God (*De civ. Dei.* XIV, XXVIII, 1–4), Dante has a much more positive view of the earthly city – in the form of the Holy Roman Empire – as divinely ordained and, in principle, good.

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lecture just explains the moral structure of this region. As with his corresponding lecture on Hell, Virgil leaves out perhaps the most theologically original parts of the canticle in terms of moral structure: an antechamber conventionally named Ante-Purgatory, which stretches from the shore up a rock face to Purgatory's gateway (*Purg.* I–VIII), and the Earthly Paradise at the summit of the mountain (*Purg.* XXVIII–XXXIII). Dante condemns five groups of souls to Ante-Purgatory: the spiritually tardy, who must wait at the mouth of the river Tiber for their ferry crossing to the shores of Ante-Purgatory; the excommunicates (*Purg.* III); the lazy who delayed repentance (*Purg.* IV); those who repented at the last minute, even at point of death (*Purg.* V–VI); and the negligent rulers (*Purg.* VII–VIII). According to a novel kind of *contrapasso*, the souls in Ante-Purgatory – deprived temporarily of the purifying pain of sense (*poena sensus*) – are forced to experience exclusively the lack of the divine vision (*poena damni*).

The emphasis in Ante-Purgatory on those who have delayed their penitence on Earth and, as a punishment for that delay, must wait for the purifying pain of sense (*poena corrigens*) highlights that Purgatory continues a moral process that should have started in this life. Ante-Purgatory is framed by the appearance of four stars symbolising the cardinal virtues and three stars symbolising the theological virtues which rise in their place (*Purg.* I, 22–27; *Purg.* VIII, 85–93). The region is characterised by a powerful nostalgia for the world left behind. Indeed, on his arrival to Purgatory, Dante-character is warned by the gatekeeper that 'whoever looks back must return outside' ('di fuor torna chi 'n dietro si guata'; *Purg.* IX, 131–32). In Augustinian terms, Christians must be in but not of this world: they are pilgrims (peregrin; *Purg.* II, 63) moving through a temporary dwelling place on their way to their true home, the celestial city (*De doctrina Christiana*, I, 4). In a thinly veiled allegory at the door of Purgatory (*Purg.* IX, 70–145), Dante-character undergoes the sacrament of penance and, on absolution, enters Purgatory to begin his satisfaction for his sins that are ritually marked as seven Ps (*peccata*) on his forehead. Through the seven terraces of Purgatory, Dante-character is purged of the seven vices alongside the souls he encounters, and the seven Ps are miraculously erased.

The first terrace is of pride, the worst of the seven vices in the order established by St Gregory the Great. Pride and envy are both vices associated with the intellect and are graver, and therefore lower on the mountain, than wrath and sloth (associated with the irascible appetite) and avarice, gluttony, and lust (associated with the concupiscible appetite).

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The seven vices are, moreover, causally connected: pride begets envy as, in seeking an empty renown, the soul feels envy towards someone able to obtain it; the last vice, lust, may be caused by gluttony as the inordinate consumption of food may dispose the soul to sexual wantonness. In keeping with popular tradition, Dante pairs each of the seven capital vices with one remedial virtue; that is, he links pride with humility (*Purg.* x–xii), envy with charity (xiii–xv), wrath with gentleness (xv–xvii), sloth with zeal (xvii–xix), avarice with poverty (xix–xxii), gluttony with abstinence (xxii–xxv), and lust with chastity (xxv–xvii). These abstract vices and virtues are embodied in the vicious and virtuous actions of particular individuals in episodes taken from the Bible, from pagan myth, and from history. The narrative *exempla* are presented in contrasting ways from sculptured reliefs (humility and pride) and ecstatic visions (gentleness and wrath) to disembodied voices (envy and charity). The Virgin Mary occupies the most important role as the model *par excellence* of the path to Christian virtue, and prayerful meditation upon her life is presented as a remedy for the wounds of sin. The souls in Purgatory are also orientated to God through passages of Scripture, the beatitudes, liturgy, and major Christian prayers (including an innovative vernacularisation of the Lord's Prayer).

Where the pains of Purgatory as a whole were conventionally depicted as a refining fire, Dante specifically reserves fire for the seventh terrace of Mount Purgatory, thereby effectively evoking the intense burning of sexual desire.[51] Some critics have been particularly struck that Dante should have included sodomites among those purging their lust in Purgatory. Barolini, for example, sees this as 'truly progressive and unconventional', and underlines the 'huge implications of allowing homosexuality to be classified as a form of lust'.[52] However, it was entirely conventional to treat sodomy as a lustful vice, and it is notable that Peraldus, in his treatise on

[51] Peraldus, for example, compares lust to a fire, also presenting – in the same passage – Mary as the perfect remedy to lust and lover of chastity. Peraldus *de vitiis*, t. iii, pa. 4, ch. 4: 'De aliis remediis contra Luxuriam', p. 43a: 'Et cum luxuria non sit qualiscunque ignis, scilicet ignis infernalis, summum remedium contra ipsam est oratio: unde sicut ille, qui patitur morbum illum, qui ignis infernalis dicitur, alicubi se facit referre ad Ecclesiam beatae Mariae virginis … Specialiter autem valet contra peccatum illud beata virgo Maria, quae sic amatrix est munditiae in se sicut in aliis.'

[52] Barolini seems to suggest that Dante was the first to allow for the salvation of sodomites: 'I know of no other treatment, written or visual, that opens itself to the idea and indeed the "reality" (in the fiction of the *Commedia*) of saved sodomites.' Nevertheless, it is clear, even just from the example of Peraldus's treatise, that sodomy was understood as a widely practised vice, requiring confession, pardon, and penance, but in no way debarring future salvation. See Teodolinda Barolini, 'Conclusion: Contemporaries Who Found Heterodoxy in Dante, Featuring (But Not Exclusively) Cecco d'Ascoli', in *Dante and Heterodoxy: The Temptations of 13th Century Radical*

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lust, treats first and extensively the *peccatum contra naturam*.[53] It is also unremarkable, in my view, that Dante chooses – on the terrace of lust – paradigmatic forms of a vice for his two *exempla*. The only penitents to circle Mount Purgatory from right to left (an allusion to their sin being 'against nature'), the sodomites are further identified by the reference to Caesar – who was called 'Regina' (queen) for having been the passive sexual partner of the King of Bithynia (*Purg.* XXVI, 76–78); by their cry of Sodom (79); and by their extreme shame (81). Circling from left to right (*Purg.* XXVI, 82–86), it seems, are the rest of the lustful penitents. Again, however, their identification with Pasiphaë, 'che s'imbestiò ne le 'mbestiate schegge' [who made herself a beast within the beast-shaped planks] (87), and their description as 'seguendo come bestie l'appetito' [following our appetites like beasts] (83), allude to the worst kinds of lustful sins outside sodomy: bestiality itself, as well as the two male–female sexual sins against nature *ad modum* delineated by Peraldus: – vaginal sex from behind ('vel cum sit bestiali modo illud opus') or with woman on top ('ut cum mulier supergreditur'), an 'unnatural' switching of gender roles also suggested by the term 'hermaphrodite' (82).[54] Just as the positive examples of Mary and Diana are incitements to chastity (*Purg.* XXV, 127–35) and remedies for the fire of lust (136–39), so the negative exempla of sodomy (King of Bithynia) and bestiality (Pasiphaë) serve as warnings of the grave dangers of sexual desire that does not follow human law (*Purg.* XXVI, 83).[55] The

Thought, ed. by Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 259–75 (pp. 263–64).

[53] Peraldus, *de vitiis*, t.iii, pa. 2, ch. 3, pp. 20a–22a. In an introductory chapter, Peraldus distinguishes five kinds of lust as – in the most general sense – the disordered love of pleasure (*inordinatus amor delectionis*), as well as the five species of lust in its specific sense (sexual pleasure). In this taxonomy, the sin against nature is the fifth species of lust proper, but Peraldus turns to it first, as the gravest of lustful sins: 'Inter quas primo prosequemur de vitio contra naturam'. Brunetto Latini similarly classifies 'peché contre nature' [the sin against nature] as a species of lust (Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. and trans. by Pietro G. Beltrami, Paolo Squillacioti, Plinio Torri, and Sergio Vatteroni [Turin: Einaudi, 2007], II, 131, p. 628); and, in *Il Tesoretto*, lists sodomy as the worst sin deriving from lust: 'Ma tra questi peccati / Son vie più condonnati / Que' che son soddomiti. / Deh, come son periti / Que' che contra natura / Brigan cotal lusura!' (Brunetto Latini, *Il Tesoretto*, ed. and trans. by Julia Bolton Holloway [New York: Garland, 1981], 2859–64). Dante, of course, judged Brunetto to have failed to live by his own precepts, and this disjuncture between word and action clearly underpins, in part, Dante-character's surprise in meeting him amongst the sodomites (*Inf.* XV, 22–30).

[54] Peraldus, *de vitiis*, t.iii, pa. 2, ch. 2. By contrast, Benvenuto da Imola suggests (Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXVI, proemio), that Dante treats natural lust ('de purgatione luxuriantium luxuria naturali') first (*Purg.* XXV, 109–39), and unnatural lust ('de purgatione luxuriantium luxuria innaturali') second (*Purg.* XXVI, 8–93). The two directions of the 'second group' reflect, as in Peraldus's taxonomy (and arguably in *Inf.* XV–XVI), the two ways: *ad substantiam* and *ad modum*.

[55] See, for example, Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XXVI, 25–42. Barolini, by contrast, appears to interpret Dante's inclusion of sodomy as a paradigmatic example of lust as an implicit affirmation

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perceptions of a rupture in Dante's moral scheme here, and of his radically 'unconventional' treatment of lust in Purgatory, are not then, in my view, justified.[56]

By reserving the punishment of fire for the vice of lust, Dante also succeeds in bringing together the final suffering of Purgatory with 'the fiery revolving sword' which guarded Eden after the Fall (Gen. 3, 24). Dante's syncretism is even more daring, as he explicitly identifies Eden with 'the golden age and its happy state' dreamed of by the ancient (pagan) poets ('l'età de l'oro e suo stato felice'; *Purg.* XXVIII, 139–41). Strikingly, it is at this stage in the poem that Virgil nonetheless departs the scene. As is clear from the staged encounter with Statius (*Purg.* XXI–XXII), Dante conventionally believed that Virgil's fourth eclogue had prophesised Christ without the poet's awareness so that Virgil himself had not benefited from its miraculous intuition. Although Virgil crowns Dante-character at Purgatory's summit with a will which is free, upright, and healthy (*Purg.* XXVII, 124–42), his role of guide is overtaken in the Earthly Paradise first by Matelda and then, after a procession which allegorises God's revelation through the books of the Bible, by Beatrice. The moral climax of *Purgatorio* is, then, Dante-character's encounter with Beatrice, who is circled by handmaidens representing the three theological and four cardinal virtues. The pilgrim is forced to confess his sin in turning from her before having the memory of his sins washed away in the river Lethe and his good memories restored in the river Eünoè. In this way, Dante equates the restoration of grace in the Earthly Paradise after ritual purgation through the seven terraces of Purgatory

that 'limited and moderated homosexual behaviour is not sinful, just as limited and moderated heterosexual behaviour is not sinful' (Barolini, 'Conclusion', p. 265). This is a strange interpretation not least because, by the same logic, it would imply that Dante considered limited and moderated adulterous heterosexual behaviour, or limited and moderated sexual behaviour with beasts, as not sinful.

[56] See Barolini, 'Conclusion', p. 265. Barolini's own interpretations are influenced heavily, as she acknowledges, by the earlier studies of Joepeh Pequigney and John Boswell, both of whom begin with quite extravagant claims for the novelty of Dante's treatment of sodomy. See Joseph Pequigney, 'Sodomy in Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*', *Representations* 36 (Autumn 1991), 22–42: 'The representation of sodomy in the *Divine Comedy* is fuller, more complicated, less consistent, more heterodox, and more important than the commentary has yet made known' (p. 22); and John E. Boswell, 'Dante and the Sodomites', *Dante Studies*, 112 (1994), 63–75: 'Although references in the *Divine Comedy* to homosexuality are few in number and brief in length, for the historian, Dante's treatment of the subject is striking, one might even say revolutionary with regard to the theological climate of the early fourteenth century' (p. 63). By contrast, I would suggest that, especially when read alongside Peraldus's treatise on lust, there is nothing particularly unconventional about Dante's poetic treatment.

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with the recovery of Eden and the upright conscience of prelapsarian man. In the overall moral structure of the canticle, the Earthly Paradise is – in the terminology of Alan of Lille – 'the purity of conscience, the image of eternal life, and the preface to the heavenly kingdom'.[57] It is only after this moral purgation that, in the last line of *Purgatorio*, the pilgrim finally is 'pure and made ready to rise to the stars' (puro e disposto a salire a le stelle; *Purg.* XXXIII, 145).

Nature and Nurture in Paradise: Astral Influence and the Virtues

For the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, Dante combines moral schemes with invented topographies: the subterranean funnel of Hell in the northern hemisphere and the seven terraces of Mount Purgatory in the southern hemisphere. For the *Paradiso*, by contrast, Dante starts with the actual universe as perceived in early fourteenth-century Ptolemaic astronomy: the seven planetary spheres, the eighth sphere of the fixed starts, the *primum mobile*, and the Empyrean. Dante informs us, however, that the souls in Paradise actually reside only in the Empyrean, the highest of the ten regions described. The blessed souls appear in the other celestial spheres just for Dante-character's benefit – that is, to signify to him their different grades of beatitude (*Par.* IV, 28–39). The blessed souls' glorious lives illustrate, furthermore, particular aspects of virtue.[58] As Scripture condescends to human faculties in attributing feet and hands to God, but means otherwise, so the blessed souls thereby condescend to Dante-character's human mode of knowing: from sense perception to intellectual cognition (*Par.* IV, 40–48). Dante thereby makes a clear distinction between what Paradise is (the ontological status of the blessed souls in the Empyrean) and how Paradise is conveyed (the illustrative appearance of the blessed souls and the angels in the nine celestial spheres). This distinction seems particularly appropriate to *Paradiso*, with Dante's insistent emphases on the limits of the human mind to comprehend divine realities and the even more limited capacity of human language to express them.

[57] See Alan of Lille, 'Summa de arte praedicatoria', in *Opere*, in Migne, *PL*, CCX, pp. 111–98 (p. 139b [73]): 'Haec est paradisus deliciarum … Haec puritas conscientiae vitae aeternae est imago, et regni coelestis praefatio.'

[58] Morgan (*Dante*, p. 177) emphasises that there is 'no precedent in the popular tradition for this device'.

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The simultaneous unity and diversity of the blessed souls – sharing the beatific vision but in different degrees – does raise a pressing theological question: how are degrees of beatitude compatible with the perfection of Paradise? Notably, the blessed soul to whom Dante-character addresses this question is Piccarda Donati. In Purgatory, Dante-character had asked her brother, Forese, 'where is Piccarda?' ('dov'è Piccarda'), only to be informed that she 'triumphs joyous with her crown on high Olympus' ('trïumfa lieta / ne l'alto Olimpo già di sua corona'; *Purg*. XXIV, 10–15). In the same encounter, Forese had prophesied the death and damnation of their brother Corso, whom he foresees dragged 'towards the valley where guilt is never forgiven' ('inver' la valle ove mai non si scolpa'; *Purg*. XXIV, 84). The hierarchy of Paradise is thus related to the central issue of divine justice in Dante's moral vision as a whole. Infernal pain, Purgatorial suffering, and Paradisiacal bliss are of different degrees in the afterlife because human beings are not equal in merit or fault on Earth. But, as Piccarda explains, a lower degree of bliss in heaven does not imply a lack of perfection because God's favour is proportionate to a particular individual's capacity to receive it. Repeating the word 'more' ('più') thrice in two lines (*Par*. III, 65–66), Dante-character asks Piccarda, the 'least' of the blessed, if she desires a higher place in heaven. Smiling 'a little' ('un poco'; 67), Piccarda explains that, were she to desire 'more' ('più'; 73), her will would be discordant with God's will: to be in God's will *is* the peace of Paradise (64–87). From this reply, the pilgrim understands both that everywhere in Heaven is Paradise *and* that the grace of the highest good does not rain there in equal measure (88–90).

How, then, does Dante structure the celestial spheres to represent these different degrees of beatitude? In the *Convivio*, Dante had already used the Ptolemaic heavens to project his idea of the system of knowledge (*Conv*. II, xiii, 2–20), playfully connecting each discipline with a heaven by a shared characteristic. For example, the ninth sphere of the *primum mobile*, which sets the eight lower celestial spheres spinning in their diurnal rotation, is like ethics, which orders our learning of all the other branches of knowledge (14–18). For *Paradiso*, however, Dante rejects any straightforward analogy of this kind. Instead, alongside any symbolic significance, he insists upon the material effect of each of the heavenly spheres on the sublunar world. The discourses on free will at the centre of *Purgatorio* clarify that, for Dante, only the human intellect and will, as non material, are free from astral influence (*Purg*. XVI, 67–130; XVIII, 49–75). All the human bodily organs and faculties including imagination, judgement, personality, and artistic gifts are influenced by the seven planetary

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heavens – an influence Dante considered to be more powerful than heredity.[59] As Charles Martel (1271–95) highlights (*Par.* VIII, 94–148), it is through these astral influences that Providence brings about the diversity in natural gifts necessary for society. Thus, when ascending through the seven planetary heavens, Dante encounters groups of souls whose lives and missions were directly informed by the particular influences of the planetary sphere in which they appear. When we find lovers in the sphere of Venus, their presence reflects Dante's belief that the planet literally moved or disposed people under its influence to love.

It is equally true that the seven planetary heavens would have suggested to Dante the ethical schemes of the seven remedial virtues or the three theological and four cardinal virtues. As we have seen, the former scheme is adopted in the seven terraces of Purgatory, while the latter is anticipated by the stars in Ante-Purgatory and Beatrice's handmaidens in the Earthly Paradise. For his vision of Paradise, the poet overlaps the scheme of the cardinal and theological virtues with the idea of astral influence on personality. As the Sun is the fourth planet orbiting the Earth in geocentric astronomy, it was believed that the Earth's shadow partly obscured the first three planets. Dante uses this 'shadowed' aspect of the heavens of the Moon (*Par.* II–V), Mercury (*Par.* V–VII), and Venus (*Par.* VIII–IX) to represent the three theological virtues – faith, hope, and love – tainted by earthly concerns. The equation between faith and the inconstant in vows (Moon), between hope and the glorious in earthly fame (Mercury), and between charity and the earthly lovers (Venus) is, however, no more than implicit. In fact, some scholars have interpreted these spheres in terms of imperfect fortitude (Moon), justice (Mercury), and temperance (Venus).[60] Both interpretations are plausible. Piccarda was inconstant in her vow when seized from her cloister unlike, she says, St Clare of Assisi (1194–1253) who persisted in her pledge of consecration despite threats (*Par.* III, 98–99). Not holding to her vow even unto martyrdom, Piccarda thereby lacked both faith and fortitude. Justinian pursued justice on Earth and consequently is presented as the ideal of the emperor-ruler. Yet he was overly motivated by the hope of earthly fame rather than by a vision of eternal glory. Cunizza d'Este was compassionate in later life, yet infamous

[59] See, for example, Robert M. Durling, 'Dante's Astrology', in Durling and Martinez (eds.), *Paradiso*, III, pp. 749–50. For a full-length study, see Richard Kay, *Dante's Christian Astrology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[60] See, for example, Ernesto G. Parodi, 'La costruzione e l'ordinamento del Paradiso dantesco', in *Poesia e storia nella "Divina Commedia"* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1965), pp. 363–586.

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for her serial lovers and marriages. Her love was intemperate, thereby falling short of the perfect love of charity.

Where imperfect ('shadowed') faith and fortitude, hope and justice, love and temperance may implicitly underpin the spheres of the Moon, Mercury, and Venus, there is little doubt about the relationship between the next four planetary spheres and the four cardinal virtues. Prudence is clearly associated with the Christian intellectuals in the heaven of the Sun (*Par*. x–xiv), fortitude with the Christian crusader-martyrs in the heaven of Mars (*Par*. xiv–xvii), justice with the just in the heaven of Jupiter (*Par*. xviii–xx), and temperance with the contemplatives in the heaven of Saturn (*Par*. xxi–xxii). And yet, the scheme of the cardinal virtues is still subordinated to the primary consideration of astral influence. Thus, it might have been more natural for Dante to follow Aquinas in pairing prudence with temperance and justice with fortitude, as we need temperance to follow what prudence counsels, and fortitude to fulfil the social demands of justice. But Dante pairs prudence with fortitude and justice with temperance, because – in terms of planetary influence – the human disposition to temperance is associated with the cold planet Saturn while the virtue of fortitude is associated with the fiery planet Mars. Beyond the seven planetary spheres (*Par*. ii–xxii), the theological virtues reappear in the eighth heaven of the fixed stars, where saints Peter, James, and John become the shining *exempla* of faith, hope, and charity (*Par*. xxiii–xxvii), and Dante-character is examined by them on each of these virtues in turn.

Although it is possible to draw out the moral structure of Dante's Paradise in this way, there is no parallel in the canticle to Virgil's lessons on the moral order of Hell or of Purgatory. There is, however, a backward glance at the seven planetary spheres in *Paradiso* xxii, 133–53. This detached, contemplative perspective on the world (in the tradition of the *contemptus mundi*) is ethically significant, precisely because it is exactly what Dante believed was lacking in his own time, and particularly so in the Roman Church. Indeed, two overarching moral themes of Dante's *Paradiso* are Christian asceticism and the Church's true mission to lead people to God. Another notable feature of *Paradiso* is that Dante-character encounters female characters only in the first and third of the seven planetary spheres, both of which are feminine (the Moon and Venus) and both of which are 'shadowed by the Sun'. Women are presented 'in *caelum* still touched by *saeculum*', as Victoria Kirkham notes, and she infers that, for Dante, 'this is where, in the Great Chain of Being, woman belongs. As matter, flesh, sense, and sin, she is defined by

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opposition to man, whose better nature makes him an entity intellectual, rational and virtuous'.[61]

It is worth addressing this issue about gender in relation to the moral structure of *Paradiso* and, indeed, of the poem as a whole. Kirkham highlights Dante's association between women and the number five, a number which may denote symbolically the flesh, sensuality (the five senses), and our animal nature (animals were created on the fifth day of creation).[62] The fifth of five female souls to speak in the fifth canto of *Inferno* (the circle of lust), Francesca da Rimini, is, for Kirkham, 'the voice for all damned womanhood, cursed with a vice of carnal sexuality'.[63] The five women sinners (one in Hell, two in Purgatory, and two in Paradise) who converse with Dante-character in the *Commedia* are also all presented as weak-willed, or – in the tradition of *nomen rei significans* – as failing to live up to their names. Francesca should have tried to be more like the saint and holy lover 'Francesco' and his order of Poor Clares, than the Quinivere of French Romance.[64] In Purgatory, Pia and Sapia appear more pious and

[61] See Victoria Kirkham, 'A Canon of Women in Dante's *Commedia*', *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989), 16–41 (p. 28). Anne Leone also addresses issues of gender in relation to the structure of the poem: see Anne Leone, '18. Women, War and Wisdom', in Corbett and Webb (eds.), *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, II, pp. 151–71.

[62] Kirkham, 'A Canon of Women', p. 25. [63] Ibid., p. 26.

[64] St Francis, 'serafico in ardore' [seraph-like in burning love], is described in *Paradiso* XI through the language of courtly love as incorporated into commentaries on the *Song of Songs*: 'che per tal donna giovinetto in guerra / del padre corse a cui, come a la morte, / la porta del piacer nessun diserra' [when, still a youth, he had to do battle with his father for a lady to whom, as if she were death, no one unlocks the gate of pleasure]. As Poggioli notes, 'the most typical Provençalism to be found in Francesca's speech is *piacer*, and Francesca whose name 'means nothing else but "French" ... translates into her own terms the idiom she had learned from such French literary sources as the romance of Lancelot'. See Renato Poggioli, 'Paolo and Francesca', in *Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 61–77 (pp. 65, 67). Poggioli is right that Francesca does not manage even to sustain the register of courtly love – the literary 'riso' [smile] of Quinivere becoming her sensual 'bocca' [mouth], a 'descent from literature to life, from fiction to reality, from romanticism to realism; or more simply, from sentimental fancy to moral truth' (Ibid, p. 63). Nonetheless, Poggioli overlooks the key point that 'La bocca mi basciò tutto tremante' [he kissed my mouth all trembling] (*Inf.* v, 136) is a sensual reading *in malo* of the first line of the *Song of Songs* – 'osculetur me osculo oris sui' [Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth] – a text whose intended literal meaning, for medieval readers, was the love of God for the human soul, or of Christ for His Church, a divine love signified through the language of erotic love. See, for example, St Bernard, 'Sermon 31: The Various Ways of Seing God', in *Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs II*, trans. by Kllian J. Walsh (Kalamazoo MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976) pp. 124–33: 'For the various desires of the soul it is essential that the taste of God's presence be varied too ... at one moment like a bashful bridegroom manoeuvering for the hidden embraces of his holy lover, for the bliss of her kisses' (pp. 130–31): 'Be careful, however, not to conclude that I see something corporeal or perceptible to the sense in this union between the Word and the soul ... I try to express with the most suitable words I can muster the ecstatic ascent of the purified mind to God, and the loving descent of God into the soul, submitting spiritual truths to spiritual men' (pp. 128–29). For a helpful introduction to St Bernard's commentary on the *Song of Songs*, see

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sapient than they were, it seems, in their life on Earth.[65] In Paradise, Piccarda (who allegedly took the name of her companion in Paradise, 'Costanza', on becoming a nun) should have been, of course, more constant.[66] Cunizza's 'Provençal name *Conissa* possibly alludes to sexual excess', as Ronald Martinez notes. In the words of one early commentator, Cunizza 'was so shamelessly inflamed by carnal love that she would not deny anyone her bed' ('amore procaci succensa nulli concubitum denegasset').[67]

If, for Dante, women's particular capacity to love may dispose them to carnal sensuality (and it is undeniable that Dante registers strongly this social anxiety in his poem), it also disposes them to a generosity and liberality in holy love. Indeed, this seems to be the implication of Cunizza's (and Dante's) celebration of the influence of Venus (*Par.* IX, 31–36).[68] It is important to register, moreover, that Dante's circle of the lustful does not, as Holly Hurlburt asserts, 'contain the largest group of women to be found in his Hell', for there are almost twice this number named in

M. Corneille Halflants, 'Introduction', in Killian J. Walsh, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1971), pp. ix–xxx.

[65] The first female soul to speak in *Purgatorio*, Pia (*Purg.* V, 133–36), was apparently murdered by her husband for alleged adultery and clearly parallels Francesca, the first soul to speak in *Inferno* (*Inf.* V. 73–142). Piccarda's 'ricorditi di me' (*Purg.* V, 133), which echoes the penitent thief's words to Christ on the cross 'memento mei' [remember me], may or may not register her guilt along with her penitence (see also, for a vertical reading of the 5s, Robin Kirkpatrick, '5. Massacre, *Miserere* and Martyrdom', in Corbett and Webb (eds.), *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, I, pp. 97–117). Sapia herself confesses that 'Savia non fui, avvegna che Sapìa / fossi chiamata' [I was not sapient, despite being called Sapia]; *Purg.* XIII, 109–10; her name is consequent on her not being, by antiphrasis, as Benvenuto points out ('suum nomen non fuit consequens rei, immo per antiphrasim … non fuit sapiens, immo insipiens et insana'; Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XIII, 109–111). Nonetheless, in Purgatory, Sapia is wise enough to correct Dante-character: 'O frate mio, ciascuna è cittadina / d'una vera città; ma tu vuo' dire / che vivesse in Italia peregrina' [O brother, everyone is a citizen of the true city; but you must have meant who lived in Italy as a pilgrim] (*Purg.* XIII, 94–96).

[66] Piccarda and Costanza exhibit a weakness in will, by assenting to the violence of the men, and thereby renouncing the chastity of their cloister (and their spousal relationship to God) for the marital duties of enforced wedlock. Even so, Dante emphasises that both Piccarda and Costanza remained constant in their hearts (*Par.* III, 109–17). For the claim that Piccarda took 'Costanza' as her cloister name, see Kirkham, p. 28. Dante's daughter would take the name 'Beatrice' as a nun.

[67] See Durling and Martinez (eds.), *Paradiso*, p. 199; Chiose ambrosiane, gloss to *Par.* IX, 32. See also Benvenuto, gloss to *Par.* IX, 31–36: 'Cunizza fui chiamata, nomen proprium est, quasi connunciens, id est, vocans'; and Pietro [1], gloss to *Par.* ix, 31–33: 'Quae Cunizza multum exarsit in amore carnali.'

[68] A modern-day counterpart to the Biblical prostitute Rahab, Cunizza, as the commentators register, follows the Biblical pattern of Mary Magdalene. In her later life, she is described as freeing her slaves, giving generously to the poor, and dedicating herself to religion. On this view, Cunizza's beatitude serves to emphasise the glory of God in drawing her to salvation. See, for example, Nicola Fosca, gloss to *Par.* IX, 31–42.

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limbo.[69] Although Dante's poem includes relatively few female characters (on Kirkham's estimate, the ratio of named women to men is 'roughly 1:10'), the proportion of women doubles for the limbo of the virtuous pagans (8 of 40, or 20 per cent), and almost half of the further virtuous pagan souls listed by Statius in Purgatory (8 of 18, or 44 per cent) are female.[70] Moreover, these numbers reverse, with named women actually outnumbering men, in the heaven of the rose (10 of 18, or 56 per cent).[71] Dante's positive portrayals of women – such as of Nella in *Purgatorio* (*Purg.* XXIII, 85–111) or of the 'fortunate' [fortunate women] of Cacciaguida's Florence in *Paradiso* (*Par.* XV, 118–26) – do invariably highlight their modesty, in contrast to prevailing sexual mores. But we should not infer from this, as does Hurlburt, that, for Dante, 'Modesty and chastity . . . defined a woman's moral existence'.[72] By including such a comparatively large proportion of named women in limbo (in total, the square of the cardinal virtues), Dante is emphasising – in his poem's moral structure – that women are capable of exceptional levels of all four cardinal virtues. Moreover, if we are to infer anything from the fact that women make up approximately 10 per cent of named characters in his afterlife as a whole, but 28 per cent of those in the limbo of the virtuous pagans and 56 per cent of those in the heaven of the rose, it is perhaps that Dante considered women more – rather than less – disposed to moral virtue and, especially, to Christian holiness than men.

Given the sophisticated organisation of evil in Hell, the school of ordered and disordered love in Purgatory, and the joyful celebration of human talents and virtues in Paradise, it is easy to lose sight of the binary division in Dante's moral universe. From a Christian point of view, this bifurcation is the one that ultimately matters – namely, the division between those who are able and freely will to submit themselves to God's infinite love and mercy and those who, wilfully or not, are closed to God's love. The first category includes all those in Paradise and in

[69] Holly Hurlburt, 'Men and Women', in Barański and Pertile (eds.), *Dante in Context*, pp. 71–82: 'That Dante's circle of the lustful contains the largest group of women to be found in his Hell is emblematic of contemporary concerns about women's alleged propensity to sexual sin' (p. 72).

[70] See Kirkham, 'A Canon of Women', p. 34: 'Although hard to estimate because the male souls have not been accurately counted, the ratio of women to men seems roughly 1:10.' There are sixteen female characters named as being in the first circle of limbo. Eight are named in *Inferno*: *Inf.* IV, 121 (Electra), 124 (Cammilla and Penthesilea), 126 (Lavinia), 128 (Lucretia, Julia, Marcia. and Cornelia). A further eight are named in *Purgatorio*: *Purg.* XXII, 110 (Antigone, Deiphile, and Argia), 111 (Ismene), 112 (Hypsipyle), 113 (Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, and Thetis), 114 (Deidamia).

[71] Ibid., p. 31. [72] Hurlburt, 'Men and Women', p. 73.

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Purgatory. The second category comprises all those in Hell. The primary condition of souls in Hell, after all, is not only a lack of the beatific vision (which they share with souls in Purgatory) but, crucially, a lack of any hope that they may ever attain it: in entering Hell's gate, they leave all hope behind (*Inf.* III, 9). In Purgatory, the souls are joyful – even in suffering – because of their living hope for the beatific vision. In Paradise, they enjoy this vision: 'intellectual light, full of love, love of the true good, full of joy, joy that surpasses every sweetness' ('luce intelletüal, piena d'amore; / amore di vero ben, pien di letizia; / letizia che trascende ogne dolzore'; *Par.* XXX, 40–42). This ultimate division between the damned and the saved strongly reaffirms the urgency of Dante's poem as a work of ethics, written 'for the good of the world that lives badly', for those who live and, while alive, still have hope. As Manfred beautifully articulates in Ante-Purgatory, 'none is so lost that the eternal love cannot return while hope keeps any of it green' ('non si perde / che non possa tornar l'etterno Amore, / mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde'; *Purg.* III, 133–35). The poem's most powerful moral message, then, is God's love for those who turn to Him. As Manfred, smiling, confesses: 'Horrible were my sins, but the infinite goodness has arms so wide that it receives whoever turns to it' ('Orribil furon li peccati miei; / ma la Bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia, / che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei'; 121–33). Union with God is the fulfilment of all human desires as Piccarda, the first soul encountered in Paradise, explains: 'And in His will is our peace. It is the sea to which all things move, both what it creates and what nature makes' ('E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace: / ell'è quel mare al qual tutto si move / ciò ch'ella crïa o che natura face'; *Par.* III, 85–87).

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CHAPTER 2

Dante's Political Polemic
Church and Empire

This chapter analyses the political dimension of Dante's ethical thought. In the first part, I present a preliminary outline of Dante's ethical–political theory, as it is articulated in the *Monarchia*. A dominant critical tradition has emphasised 'the fundamental difference' between the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia*. I demonstrate, by contrast, the fundamental unity between these two works, and show how Dante's distinctive theory, with its strict division between temporal and spiritual power, underlies some of the key surprises that we find in his depiction of the other-world, in relation to previous traditions both popular and learned about the afterlife.[1] The second part of this chapter analyses Dante's striking presentation of pagans in the afterlife. I argue that, for Dante, the virtuous pagan instantiates secular human flourishing (man's earthly ethical goal) in a poem which literally depicts the afterlife. I also show how Dante's presentation of pagans, and especially Roman pagans, forms a major structural argument for the divinely mandated vocation of the Holy Roman Empire, a key thesis of the *Monarchia* as well. The third part of the chapter examines Dante's treatment of popes and prelates in the afterlife. I argue that, in line with the dualistic theory of the *Monarchia*, this contributes to a highly controversial manifesto for the radical reform of the Roman Church.

Dante's Dualistic Ethical–Political Theory

Towards the end of his life, Dante developed a friendship with the Bolognese professor Giovanni del Virgilio, exchanging poetical epistles

[1] My analysis draws on Morgan's extremely informative study of the topographical motifs and inhabitants found in popular traditions about the afterlife (Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World*). For a selection of texts about the afterlife prior to Dante, see also Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Italica, 1989).

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which have come down to us as his Latin eclogues.[2] After Dante's death, Giovanni composed an epitaph in memory of the theologian-poet, who, he writes, assigned 'to the dead, their places, and to the twin swords, their kingdoms' ('qui loca defunctis, gladiisque regnumque gemellis').[3] In this single line, Giovanni celebrates, and gives equal weight to, Dante's vision of the Christian afterlife in the three canticles of the *Commedia*, and to his argument for the strict division between temporal and spiritual power (the 'twin swords') in the three books of *De Monarchia*.

The relationship between temporal and spiritual power was one of the most contested issues of Dante's period. In the late thirteenth century, a progressive *via media* had been adopted by Christian-Aristotelian scholars (typically accommodating the relative autonomy of these two powers with degrees of indirect subordination). At the beginning of the fourteenth century, however, positions became more polarised.[4] In 1302, the extreme papal claim for the direct subordination of temporal to spiritual power was represented by Giles of Rome's *De ecclesiastica potestate* and Pope Boniface VIII's derivative *Unam Santam*.[5] In the same year, John of Paris's *Tractatus de regia potestate et papali* rebuffed these claims, arguing instead that the strict division between temporal and spiritual power is divinely mandated, and that if the pope abuses the spiritual sword ('gladius spiritualis'), a temporal monarch may legitimately wage war against him, as an enemy of the public good.[6]

Dante's *De Monarchia* takes this division of jurisdictions to its extreme: Dante argues for the complete independence of two hemispheres of

[2] See Philip H. Wicksteed and Edmund G. Gardner, 'Dante's Eclogues and del Virgilio's Poetic Remains', in Philip H. Wicksteed and Edmund G. Gardner, *Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio* (London: Archibald Constable & Company, 1902), pp. 117–75.

[3] Ibid., p. 174.

[4] Thus, in *De regno* (c. 1267), Aquinas clearly distinguishes the role of the monarch, with responsibility for the temporal sphere, from the priest, with responsibility for the spiritual sphere, but he argues for the indirect power ('potestas indirecta') of the pope in temporal matters ('in temporalibus'). For a helpful analysis of the context of this debate, see Matthew S. Kempshall, 'Accidental Perfection: Ecclesiology and Political Thought in *Monarchia*', in *Dante and the Church*, ed. by Paolo Acquaviva and Jennifer Petrie (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 127–71.

[5] Giles of Rome may even have been the author of the papal bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302). The views of *Unam Sanctam*, in any case, bear clear resemblance to Giles's *De Regimine Principum* (1277–80) and *De ecclesiastica potestate* (1302). See Giles of Rome, *De ecclesiastica potestate*, ed. and trans. by Arthur P. Monahan (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) and Giles of Rome, *De renunciatione pape,* ed. and trans. into German by John R. Eastman (Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

[6] John of Paris, *Tractatus de regia potestate et papali*, in Johannes Quidort von Paris, *Über königliche und päpstliche Gewalt (De regia potestate et papali)*, ed. and trans. into German by Fritz Bleinstein (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1969), and see especially cap. xxii. l. 9–11, p. 196.

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human conduct institutionally governed by the Empire and the Church.[7] Dante's rationale for this theory combines a particular interpretation of Aristotelian anthropology with a novel extension of Aristotle's political theory to apply to universal empire. He starts from the premise that man, uniquely amongst animals, has a hybrid nature: as mortal, man pertains to the world of time and contingency; as immortal, he connects to the sphere of eternity. In virtue of this, man has two ethical goals: human flourishing in this life and the beatific vision in the next. Dante then argues that the means to attain these goals have been revealed by the teachings of philosophy and of Divine revelation, respectively, and that the institutions divinely ordained to facilitate these journeys are the Empire (with temporal power and the responsibility for man's earthly felicity) and the Church (with spiritual power and the responsibility for man's eternal beatitude).[8] For Dante, then, the Church should possess no temporal power or wealth.

Dante's distinction between the *lex naturalis* and the *lex divina*, although not ubiquitous in thirteenth-century thought, is a feature of those scholastic authors committed to the recuperation of neo-Aristotelian philosophy.[9] But whereas St Thomas Aquinas, for example, integrates and subordinates the order of nature to the order of grace, Dante's strategy of two autonomous ethical goals emphasises distinction and separation rather than integration.[10] This leads to three problematic ethical implications: (1) it potentially relegates the function of Christianity solely to man's eternal destiny in the next life; (2) the intrinsic perfectibility of human nature appears to render 'healing grace' (*gratia sanans*) redundant, with the implication that only 'elevating grace' (*gratia elevans*) is

[7] Dante's only concession to papal supremacy, which does not include any compromise of temporal power, is his analogy to the reverence that a son owes his father. See *Mon*. III, xv, 118.

[8] Although Dante develops this theory in *Convivio* III–IV, its most concise statement appears in the final chapter of *De Monarchia* (see *Mon*. III, xv, 1–18).

[9] Kenelm Foster's scholarship, which carefully distinguishes Dante's approach to the relationship between the order of nature and the order of grace from the approaches of his immediate contemporaries and predecessors (and, in particular, from the approach of Aquinas), remains foundational. For two recently published monographs which explicitly build on Foster's seminal work on this subject, see John Took, *Conversations with Kenelm: Essays on the Theology of the 'Commedia'* (London: Ubiquity Press, 2013), and Christopher Ryan, *Dante and Aquinas: A Study of Nature and Grace in the 'Comedy'* (London: University College London Arts & Humanities Publications and Ubiquity Press, 2013).

[10] In Aquinas's synthesis, the moral virtues are endowed with 'an entirely new setting and direction' as they become 'organs of grace': the moral virtues are 'offered to God as a way – as *the* way – of cooperating with his grace' (Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 254). See also Etienne Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, trans. by David Moore (London: Sheed and Ward, 1949; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1968). Gilson argues that Dante writes his *Monarchia* as an anti-thesis to Aquinas's *De regimine Principum* (Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 191–201).

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theoretically necessary for man; and (3) it establishes a dichotomy and tension between man's pursuit of an earthly goal and his (apparently competing) pursuit of an eternal goal.[11] The political ramifications are correspondingly problematic. Where other Christian-Aristotelian authors advocated a *via media* mediating between temporal and spiritual power, Dante takes the distinction between *homo naturalis* and *homo Christianus* to an extreme. By doing so, he justifies the autonomy of Empire and Church which, in his view, independently derive their authority directly from God.

Dante's radical dualistic theory, particularly given the extreme theocratic pretensions of the contemporary papacy, could not but suffer rebuke. Only six years after Dante's death, it was lambasted by the Dominican Guido Vernani in *De reprobatione 'Monarchiae' compositae a Dante Alighiero Florentino*. Dante's theory was, moreover, politically explosive.[12] In 1326, when Louis of Bavaria marched into Italy to oppose Pope John XXII and to install the anti-pope Nicholas V, Dante's *Monarchia* was cited by the Imperial side to rally troops to its cause.[13] Meanwhile, Bertrand du Pouget, the papal legate in Italy, accused Dante of heresy, ordered all copies of his *Monarchia* to be publicly burnt, and threatened to disinter and incinerate Dante's bodily remains.[14] Dante's *Monarchia* was subsequently placed on

[11] Foster, *The Two Dantes*, pp. 238–39: 'It was much less easy to find Christianity a place, *consonant with the philosophical model*, within the course of human life on earth; for here philosophy seemed already to provide all the required concepts . . . the influence of divine grace in the human soul and body in the present life – a central issue for Christian ethics – is entirely ignored' [the italics are Foster's]. Dante conceptualises human nature as a limit which 'had to be crossed – transcended and left behind – in the hero's quest for God' (Ibid., p. 157); 'the idea of human perfectibility to be realised before death and within the limits of human nature; this being distinguished with a quite new precision, from the "new man" of Christian teaching, from our nature as transformed by divine grace' (Ibid., p. 220).

[12] *Contro Dante* (*Contra Dantem) Fr. Guidonis Vernani tractatus 'De reprobatione "Monarchiae" compositae a Dante Alighiero Florentino*, ed. and trans. into Italian by Jarro (G. Piccini) (Florence, Rome, and Milan: R. Bemporad & figlio, 1906). For an English translation of Vernani's treatise, as well as of Pope John XXII's Bull *Si fratrum*, and for an introduction to the reception of Dante's *Monarchia*, see Anthony K. Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy: An Historical Study with Accompanying Translations of Dante Alighieri's 'Monarchia', Guido Vernani's 'Refutation of the "Monarchia" Composed by Dante', and Pope John XXII's Bull 'Si fratrum'* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

[13] See Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 34–41: 'Just how deeply Dante's elegant, poetical, and theological *Monarchia*, comandeered by Ludwig's propagandists, influenced these historic charades we can only conjecture, but we do know how it suffered' (p. 37). See also 'L'opera di Dante lodata da Graziolo Bambaglioli', in *Dante e Firenze: Prose antiche*, ed. by Oddone Zenatti (Florence: Sansoni, 1984), pp. 1–3; and 'Preface', in *Vernani*, ed. by Jarro, p. vi.

[14] See Adriano Comollo, 'Accuse, condanne, anatemi di autorità religiose e politiche contro Dante: La censura e Dante', in *Il dissenso religioso in Dante* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), pp. 41–53. See also Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 3–107 (p. 38).

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the Vatican index of prohibited books in 1554, only to be removed in 1881.[15]

It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that the early commentators and readers, right up to the twentieth century, showed little regard for the *Monarchia* (with only limited reading of the *Convivio*) – and paid little attention to Dante's dualistic theory – in their interpretation of the poem. Leaving aside the restricted early readership of the *Monarchia* and the *Convivio*, it is understandable that the early Dante enthusiasts who commented on his poem, the first of whom included his sons Pietro and Jacopo d'Alighieri, shied away from reading the *Commedia* in light of this extreme dualism.[16] But even much of twentieth-century Dante scholarship, which scarcely needed to protect Dante's poem in this way, sought to limit this dualism to Dante's Latin and vernacular prose works (marginalised as chronologically earlier 'minor works'). Thus Bruno Nardi, a dominant scholar in this tradition, claimed that 'In the *Commedia* there is no more trace of the "two final ends" of the *Monarchia*.'[17] Kenelm Foster and Etienne Gilson, both acute readers of philosophical heterodoxy in Dante's prose works, were still keen to emphasise that 'the *Comedy* is quite another matter' and that its subject 'is theological – the final aims of man (*ultima regna*)'.[18]

More recently, the compositional chronology underlining this view – that Dante's *Monarchia* represents a dualistic stage in his intellectual trajectory that the poet left behind when he began writing the *Commedia* – has been systematically refuted. Modern philological evidence dates the

[15] For the reception and censorship of the *Monarchia* in the sixteenth century, see Davide Dalmas, *Dante nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento italiano* (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2005): 'Dopo esser stato esaltato nel *Catalogus Testium Veritatis* (1556), perché "probavit Papam non esse supra Imperatorem, nec habere aliquod jus in Imperium", il trattato dantesco è stampato per la prima volta a Basilea nel 1559 presso Oporinus, in una raccolta di scritti politici – aperta dal *De formula Romani Imperij* di Andrea Alciato – concordi nell'elevare l'autorità imperiale rispetto a quella papale' (pp. 12–13).

[16] The most recent treatment of the reception of the *Convivio* is that by Simon A. Gilson, 'Reading the *Convivio* from Trecento Florence to Dante's Cinquecento Commentators', *Italian Studies*, 64: 2 (2009), 266–95. Gilson finds no positive evidence to suggest that Dante circulated the treatise during his lifetime, although he notes Claudia Villa as, most recently, sustaining the minority view (n. 4, p. 268). The three thirteenth-century commentators who do make use of the *Convivio* in their commentaries on the *Commedia* (Dante's son Pietro, Andrea Lancia, and the writer of the *Ottimo Commento*) either knew Dante directly or were active in Florence (p. 269). This suggests a limited dissemination of the text in the immediate period after Dante's death. Indeed, as Gilson shows, the work attained wide circulation beyond Tuscany only with the *editio princeps* in 1490.

[17] Bruno Nardi, *Dal 'Convivio' alla 'Commedia'*, ed. with a new introduction by Ovidio Capitani (Rome: Muratori, 1992), p. 311: 'Nella *Commedia* non v'è più traccia dei "duo ultima" della *Monarchia*.'

[18] Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 160; Gilson, *Dante the Philosopher*, pp. 277–78.

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Monarchia to the last few years of Dante's life, when the greater part of the *Commedia* was already written.[19] Prue Shaw has argued convincingly that 'there seems no good reason to doubt' the authenticity of 'the cross-reference in Book I to the *Paradiso*' and, therefore, that the *Monarchia* was written 'certainly no earlier than 1314 and possibly [during] the very last years of its author's life'.[20] Further recent historical and contextual arguments have corroborated Shaw's thesis. Specifically, they have narrowed the dating of the *Monarchia* to after 1316 and, most probably, to the years 1317–18.[21]

This might make us reconsider Dante's *Commedia* and *Monarchia* not only as (in Giovanni del Virgilio's estimation) his two most significant works, but also as fundamentally related. Dante's eschatological poem in the vernacular certainly served, like his political thesis in Latin, as imperial propaganda, calling insistently for the restoration of the 'two suns' (Empire and Church) in Rome: 'Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo, / due soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada / facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo' [Rome, which made the world good, used to have two suns that made visible the two paths, of the world and of God] (*Purg.* XVI, 106–8). But, as we shall see, Dante's radical theory also profoundly influenced the very structure of his vision of the afterlife, contributing to an innovative, and distinctly politicised, eschatology. We can observe the imperial and papal dimensions of Dante's dualistic ethical–political argument particularly clearly, I believe, in his representation of pagans and popes in the *Commedia*.

Pagans in Dante's Christian Afterlife, and the Ideal of Empire

Alison Morgan's analysis of the demography of Dante's afterlife overturned the generally held critical assumption that his introduction of contemporary

[19] Thus, Nardi, Gilson, and Foster – all of whom highlighted the heterodoxy of Dante's dualism in his prose works – nonetheless regarded this as a phase in Dante's intellectual development which was left behind, or not directly relevant to, the project of the *Commedia*. All three scholars, at least initially, worked on the basis of the incorrect premise that both the *Convivio* and the *Monarchia* preceded the composition of the *Commedia*.

[20] Dante, *Monarchy*, trans. and ed. by Prue Shaw, p. xxxiii.

[21] Dante, *Monarchia*, trans. with commentary by Richard Kay, pp. xx–xxxi; Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy*, pp. 3–49. Charles Till Davis reaffirms the centrality of Dante's distinctive political convictions in the *Commedia*, convincingly overturning the characteristic view of his teacher, Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves's generation, that the *Monarchia* was an 'aberration'. See, for example, Charles Till Davis, 'Dante and the Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 257–69 (p. 257). However, although highlighting the political content, Davis does not explore the implications for the formal structure of Dante's afterlife.

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and obscure figures, and his portrayal of them as 'lifelike individuals', were major, original contributions to Christian eschatology.[22] Although Dante may be the first to combine a classificatory moral scheme with detailed characterisation ('a convincing character who incarnates the sin of which he is suffering the consequence'), Morgan shows how, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many examples of 'obscure individuals' emerged in popular visions of the afterlife, many of whom were portrayed as 'rounded characters'.[23] Dante's originality lies, instead, 'in the inclusion of classical figures, who are totally unrepresented in the earlier medieval texts'.[24] Of the approximately three hundred characters resident in Dante's otherworld, eighty-four are classical figures. Why, then, does Dante not only include classical figures, itself a novelty in prior vision literature, but include them in such great numbers? Morgan's explanation is brief and reductive: the visions are 'popular in nature', whereas Dante, in the *Commedia*, is – by including classical figures – attempting to unite the learned and popular traditions, to aspire to the grandeur of a classical epic.[25]

There is, I think, much more to Dante's innovative inclusion of classical figures in his vision of the afterlife than literary ambition. Indeed, arguably more startling than Dante's inclusion of classical figures is the location in which more than half of them (fifty-one), and more than one sixth of the total characters in the poem, are to be found: Limbo, the first circle of Dante's Hell. The representation of Limbo, of itself, was unproblematic. It was conventionally identified with 'Abraham's bosom', the place inhabited by faithful Jews (the *limbus patronum*) until the harrowing of Hell. That Limbo was still occupied in 1300, the date of the poem, was also unproblematic. Many thirteenth-century theologians supported the hypothesis that unbaptised infants, dying with original but not personal sin, would eternally occupy Limbo (the *limbus infantium*); there they

[22] See Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 72–73: 'Contemporary characters ... make up a greater proportion, numerically, of the inhabitants of the other world in previous representations than in the *Comedy*; in this respect Dante's originality has hitherto been greatly overestimated.'

[23] Ibid., pp. 51–53.

[24] Ibid., p. 54. It is important to register, however, that although pagans may not be present in the hundred or so popular visions of the afterlife that Morgan examines, the issue of pagan salvation or the fate of pagans in the afterlife was taken up in other, more learned texts. For an examination of 'the problem of paganism' up to and beyond the time of Dante, see John Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

[25] Morgan, *Dante*, p. 58. 'Dante's introduction of classical figures is innovatory, and consonant with the aim of writing a work which would rival the classical epic as well as take account of the classical revival of the twelfth century' (p. 72).

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would suffer the lack of the vision of God, but no exterior or interior pain. In contrast, the notion that Limbo would be occupied by grown men and women, and pagans to boot, was – as the reception of Dante's first readers testifies – deeply problematic and troubling.[26] Augustine explicitly ruled out the possibility of a Limbo, equivalent to the *limbus infantium*, for pagans as 'shameless presumption' because all pagan virtue is contaminated.[27] Aquinas was perfectly comfortable with pagan salvation, and had developed a sophisticated theory of implicit faith whereby a pagan, even just by believing in Divine providence, could be seen implicitly to believe in Christ to come.[28] Nevertheless, Aquinas argued that it would be simply impossible for an adult, having reached the age of discretion, to avoid personal sin and die only with original sin.[29] Dante, however, adopts precisely this state as the moral situation of the virtuous pagans in the *Commedia* and, just as importantly, rejects the theory of implicit faith, thereby damning the 'virtuous pagans' to Limbo eternally.[30]

Why does Dante include so many classical figures (itself unprecedented) in the afterlife and, against major theological authorities, locate the majority of these (fifty-one) in, of all places, Limbo? The answer, I believe, lies in his dualistic theory. Dante uses the virtuous pagan – to whom the spiritual goal, Divine revelation, and the institutional Church were of course unavailable – to figuratively represent secular human flourishing (man's earthly goal) in a poem which literally depicts the afterlife.[31]

For the overall topology and structure of Dante's Hell, two occupants of Limbo are particularly significant: Dante's guide, Virgil, and Aristotle. For visionaries of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the choice of guide was typically fulfilled by a guardian angel, a local saint, a church

[26] For example, Guido da Pisa simply states that Dante's Limbo of the virtuous pagans is contrary to 'our faith', according to which no souls except innocent children reside in Limbo ('Sed nostra fides non tenet quod ibi sint nisi parvuli innocentes'; Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* IV, 82–84).

[27] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum haeresis Pelagiannae defensorem*, IV, iii, 26.

[28] See Kenelm Foster's seminal analysis of Aquinas's doctrine of implicit faith in relation to Dante's treatment of virtuous pagans, in *The Two Dantes*, pp. 156–89 (especially p. 172).

[29] See, for example, Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 12. Through his free will, man may avoid sin in individual instances but, without grace, he cannot avoid – at some point – falling into mortal sin ('nisi per gratiam a peccato liberetur, in aliquod peccatum mortale quandoque incidet').

[30] For a fuller discussion, see 'The Limbus Gentilium Virtuosum', in Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 123–29.

[31] This area of Limbo is implicitly compared to Virgil's Elysian fields and contains, alongside illustrious poets, two further groups: noble pagans who exemplify moral virtue and a 'philosophical family' which exemplifies intellectual flourishing.

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patron, or the founder of an order.[32] Although Dante absorbs many of the characteristic features of the relationship between visionary and guide, his choice of guide, then, is striking: Virgil is neither an angel nor a saint, but instead a pagan who, as we soon discover, is eternally damned. Why Virgil? Clearly, at a meta-poetic level, Dante borrows extensively from Virgil's depiction of the pagan underworld (Hades) in book six of the *Aeneid* to construct his own vision of Hell; at a narrative level, this relationship is embodied by Dante-character literally following Virgil. But once again, there is more to it. In the *Commedia*, Virgil identifies himself not as the poet of the pagan underworld (important though that is), but rather as the poet of Roman Empire ('cantai di quel giusto / figliuol d'Anchise' [I sang of that just son of Anchises]; *Inf.* I, 73–74). This reflects the fact that Dante treats Virgil's *Aeneid*, in his prose works as in the *Commedia*, as a divinely revealed text in which God authorises and legitimates the Roman Empire as *imperium sine fine*.[33]

Dante's eulogy to the pagan poet Virgil in the opening of the poem as 'lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore' [my master and my author] (*Inf.* I, 67–87) is matched only by his eulogy to the pagan philosopher Aristotle in Limbo itself: ''l maestro di color che sanno' [the master of those that know] (*Inf.* IV, 130–32). This choice reflects another remarkable feature of Dante's vision of Hell in relation to its wider context. As Morgan has demonstrated, most of the sins punished in Dante's Hell are found in popular Christian visions of the other-world, or are listed in twelfth- and thirteenth-century confession manuals.[34] What is innovative in Dante's vision, as we have seen, is the subordination of this Christian material and competing classificatory schemes to a distinctively pagan moral categorisation taken principally from Aristotle. When Dante asks about the moral ordering of evil in Hell in *Inferno* XI, Virgil responds with reference not to Christian Scripture, but rather to natural philosophy, citing Aristotle's

[32] See Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 84–107 (especially pp. 93–94).

[33] In the *Convivio*, Dante defends his argument that the Roman Empire was established by Divine providence rather than by brute force with reference to the authority of Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'A costoro – cioè alli Romani – né termine di cose né di tempo pongo; a loro hoe dato imperio sanza fine' [To them – that is to the Romans – I set neither boundary in space or time: to them I have given power without end] (*Conv.* IV, iv, 11). See also Moore, *Studies in Dante*, p. 167: '[Virgil' *Aeneid* is] like a Scripture text, . . . a direct proof of God's purpose for the universal empire of Rome.'

[34] The sins in Dante's Hell frequently parallel those found in the wider Christian vision literature of his time. See Morgan, *Dante*, 108–43 (p. 131): 'Dante's classification of sin is in some sense the result of a marriage between a large mass of traditional material and the Aristotelian categories' (p. 110; p. 131). Even if the actual influences upon his division of evil in Hell are varied, then, this does not alter the fact that Dante is at pains to represent the moral structure of Hell in terms of natural ethics.

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Ethics (80), his *Physics* (101) and, arguably, his *Metaphysics* (97) within just twenty-two lines.[35]

Why Dante's particular eulogy of these two pagans, Virgil and Aristotle? This double emphasis reflects Dante's conviction, born from experience, that ethics without power is weak, while power without ethics is dangerous (*Conv.* IV, vi, 17). Dante believed that the pagan Aristotle had given a comprehensive account of secular ethics: 'qui ab Aristotele felicitatem ostensam reostendere conaretur' (*Mon.* I, i, 4). And, contrary to apologists for papal temporal power, he believed that Imperial power was divinely instituted by God to administer justice and to enforce the moral law. As Davis puts it: 'the emperor therefore presides over the moral world. It is his duty to put the ethical teachings of philosophers, especially Aristotle, into effect.'[36] In *Purgatorio* VI, Dante bemoans the empty seat (the 'saddle') of empire: what use are laws (the 'bridle') if there is no one to enforce them (*Purg.* VI, 88–90)? Arguably, then, one purpose of Dante's *Inferno* is to represent in the afterlife the moral justice which, in the absence of an Emperor, Dante saw unfulfilled on Earth.

Nowhere is this political polemic clearer than in the final climax, or rather anti-climax, of Dante's Hell: the depiction of Satan. With regard to the visionary tradition, that Dante's Satan should digest sinners is unremarkable.[37] His image of Satan's three mouths endlessly chewing three sinners, moreover, seems to derive directly from the vivid mosaics in the baptistery of Florence. What is extraordinary, rather, is the identity of two of the three sinners. At the centre, unsurprisingly, is Judas, who betrayed Christ. On either side, however, are the pagan Roman republicans Brutus and Cassius. Where Shakespeare would allow Brutus to justify his tyrannicide by his love for republican Rome ('Not that I lov'd Caesar less, but that I lov'd Rome more'), Dante considers Brutus and Cassius the very worst sinners precisely because, by betraying Julius Caesar, they sought to frustrate the divinely ordered establishment of a universal Roman ruler.

Julius Caesar himself is amongst the 'virtuous pagans' in Limbo: 'Cesare armato con li occhi grifagni' [Caesar in armour with hawk-like eyes]

[35] *Inf.* XI, 80: 'la tua Etica'; XI, 101: 'la tua Fisica'; XI, 97: 'Filosofia'. Busnelli (p. 128) argues that the reference to philosophy must refer specifically to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and not to Aristotelian philosophy in general.

[36] See Davis, 'Dante and the Empire', p. 259. See also Charles Till Davis, *Dante's Italy, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), p. 38: 'Just as Augustus had prepared the earthly stage for Christ's first coming, the "King of the Romans and the Christians" must make the world ready for his final descent.'

[37] See 'The Presentation of Satan', in Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 21–23.

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(*Inf.* IV, 123). Indeed, of the pagans lauded for their moral virtue in Limbo (*Inf.* IV, 121–29), all – with the exception of Saladin who is alone and to one side ('e solo, in parte, vidi 'l Saladino'; 129) – are connected to the history of Troy and Rome. Conversely, of the twenty-nine classical figures condemned to corporeal punishment in Hell, many – like Brutus and Cassius – frustrated or sought to frustrate the providential emergence of the Roman Empire. Their attempts are portrayed by Dante as entirely futile. Thus, in the first circle of lust, we encounter Helen and Paris, whose elopement led to the destruction of Troy; Dido, whose love Aeneas had to overcome to found Rome; and Cleopatra who, with Mark-Anthony, turned against Julius Caesar's nephew Augustus. In the eighth circle of fraud, moreover, Ulysses, Diomedes, and Sinon are punished for their role in the deception of the Trojan Horse. In Dante's providential view of human history, the consequent defeat of Troy would ultimately lead to the emergence of the Roman race which, in turn, would eventually subjugate the Greeks to its imperial rule.[38]

Although the vast majority of Dante's classical figures are found either in Limbo (fifty-one) or in the rest of Hell (twenty-nine), three notable exceptions exist: Cato of Utica, the custodian of Purgatory's shores, and Ripheus and Trajan, who are amongst the just in Paradise. Strikingly, Cato is the next character encountered by Dante-character on his other-worldly journey, after Brutus and Cassius. Like them, Cato was a staunch republican and enemy of Julius Caesar. If not in Satan's jaws (he was, after all, no traitor), he should surely, following Augustine's specific condemnation of him as a famous suicide, be condemned with the violent-against-themselves in circle 7.[39] If not there, he should, at the least, be found with Lucretia (another Roman suicide whom Dante, unlike Augustine, deems virtuous) in the first circle of Limbo. Instead, Dante choreographs an elaborate narrative eulogy to Cato on the shores of Purgatory (*Purg.* I, 13–84), a decision that, for the poem's first readers, carried with it more than a whiff of heresy.[40] Why, then, Cato's startling presence here? The reason, I believe, is that Cato signifies the secular perfection of human nobility which Dante, in his dualistic ethical theory, distinguishes from man's eternal, Christian beatitude. Following Roman

[38] Ulysses and Diomedes are punished amongst the counsellors of fraud (*Inf.* XXVI), whereas Sinon is punished amongst the falsifiers of words, the final of the ten 'evil-pockets' (malebolge) which make up the eighth circle of simple fraud (*Inf.* XXX, 91–148).

[39] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I, 22–24 (23).

[40] See, for example, Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* I, 28–33: 'quae videtur sapere haeresim'.

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authors, and with scant regard to subsequent Christian critique, Dante presents Cato as truly the quintessential model and pattern of pagan virtue.

Critics have failed to observe, however, that Cato in Ante-Purgatory is, with respect to his punishment, arguably no different from the virtuous pagans in Limbo. Souls in Ante-Purgatory, like the Limbo dwellers, experience the lack of the Divine vision (*poena damni*) but do not experience corporeal pain (*poena sensus*). What differentiates the state of the souls in Ante-Purgatory from their counterparts in Limbo is that their lack of the Divine vision and of corporeal pain is temporary (they will experience the *poena sensus* on the terraces of Purgatory so as to attain the vision of God in Paradise), whereas the Limbo dwellers' lack of both Divine vision and corporeal pain is eternal. Dante arguably leaves it as ambiguous, then, whether this temporal distinction applies to Cato himself. Were he to remain permanently in Ante-Purgatory (unlike all the Christian souls who pass temporarily through), he would not, in fact, be saved: Ante-Purgatory would then be equivalent in its state (*poena damni* without *poena sensus*) to Limbo, except that Cato, unlike the Limbo dwellers, would be eternally bereft of human company. This fate would be worse than that experienced by his wife Marcia and a punishment, perhaps, for his suicide (in isolating himself from the human community). Most critics, however, have concluded that Cato is saved and will rise, on the last judgement, to heaven (and this may well be the implication of *Purgatorio* I, 73–75).[41]

If Dante leaves open the possibility of Cato's salvation, he is nevertheless insistent on the eternal damnation of Virgil and the other virtuous pagans. Although two virtuous pagans, Ripheus and Trajan, are amongst the blessed in Dante's Paradise, their presence is due to two exceptional miracles which serve to accentuate, and prove, the general rule (*Par.* XX, 106–29). The fate of the souls in Ante-Purgatory, who live with hope and desire for the beatific vision, only intensifies Virgil's consciousness of his own eternal fate – as one who lives without hope in desire (*Inf.* IV, 42). Whereas the long wait of the former – for the excommunicates, thirty times the period of their contumacy; for the rest, the period equal to the duration of their earthly lives – is bearable, Virgil's wait entails little else but despair, as it represents not waiting at all but rather eternal loss

[41] I give a fuller analysis of Dante's reception and representation of Cato of Utica, in Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 129–33. I did not consider then, as I do here, the parallel eschatological condition of the Limbo dwellers and Cato in Ante-Purgatory, and the implications of this parallel for Cato's salvation (or damnation). Especially given Dante's condemnation of suicide in *Inferno* XIII, the hypothesis that, at the final judgement, Cato will remain eternally alone in Ante-Purgatory is, I think, not an implausible interpretation.

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(*Purg.* VII, 7–8). In this way, Dante makes the eternal damnation of Virgil and the other virtuous pagans a key drama in the poem as a whole. Virgil's fate has also exercised critics, many of whom, even from the early commentators, have tried 'to save Virgil'.[42]

It is crucial to reiterate that the damnation of pagans (whether virtuous or not) was not an inevitable or irresolvable problem for Dante, as he had theological resources at his disposal, such as Aquinas's theory of implicit faith, which he chose not to deploy. Dante's original insistence that pagans could be without personal sin yet damned is, instead, a corollary of his dualistic ethical thought. On the one hand, it upholds pagan standards of virtue and philosophy as flawless and, therefore, legitimate guides to man's temporal felicity. On the other hand, it places an exclusive primacy on Christian faith for man's eternal salvation: a man, no matter how perfect in the moral and intellectual virtues, cannot be saved without faith.[43] In short, Dante sacrifices the destiny of Virgil and of the virtuous pagans in general to the exigencies of his theological–political vision. Dante's representation of pagans in the afterlife is, then, directly related to the theological–political worldview articulated in the *Monarchia*. It supports an ethical theory which Dante put at the service of an imperial political programme. And it is no accident that the pagans exemplary for their moral virtue in Limbo (*Inf.* IV, 121–29) and the four virtuous pagans we encounter outside Limbo – Virgil, Cato, Ripheus, and Trajan – all played a critical role in the development of the Roman and Holy Roman Empires.

Popes in Hell, and a Celestial Manifesto for the Roman Church

Dante's inclusion of contemporary characters, as we have seen, is not original: according to Morgan's analysis, they make up 69 per cent of the identified characters in popular visions and only 36 per cent in Dante's poem.[44] Notably, in her detailed comparison, one striking novelty occurs within this category: no writer before Dante had dared to place contemporary popes in Hell. Dante not only damns Pope Nicholas III (b. 1225; papacy 1277–80) to Hell as a simoniac (one who sells spiritual office for material gain), but also has him prophecy that the current

[42] See, for example, Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* IV, 43–45.

[43] Dante insists, in the *Monarchia* and the *Commedia*, that 'no one can be saved without faith (assuming that he has never heard anything of Christ), no matter how perfectly endowed he might be in the moral and intellectual virtues in respect both of his character and his behaviour' (*Mon.* II, vii. 4). See also *Inf.* IV, 31–42 and *Purg.* VII, 22–36.

[44] See Morgan, *Dante*, p. 60.

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Pope Boniface VIII (b. 1230: papacy 1294–1303) and the future Pope Clement V (b. 1264; papacy 1305–1314) will join him there.[45] Dante also implies that Pope John XXII (b. 1244; papacy 1316–1334), who was Clement V's successor after a two-year *interregnum*, will also join him amongst the simoniacs: in *Paradiso*, St Peter refers to them both by their place of origin (Cahors and Gascony) and describes them as preparing to drink his blood (*Par.* XXVII, 58–60).[46] Celestine V (b. 1215; papacy 1294), who was canonised by Clement V in 1313, is also condemned by Dante to Hell, residing amongst the pusillanimous 'neutrals', as one 'who in his cowardice made the great refusal' (*Inf.* III, 59–60). In fact, Celestine V's abdication led to the pontificate of Boniface VIII, Dante's *bête noire*.

Only three contemporary popes escape Dante's Hell. Pope Adrian V (b. 1210/1215; papacy 1276) does so, in Dante's account, only by a hair's breadth, and he is presented in humiliating prostration on the terrace of avarice in Purgatory (*Purg.* XIX, 103–14). Pope Martin IV (b. 1210/1220; papacy 1281–85) is presented as the worst of gluttons; in consequence, his face is more pierced than all the others on the terrace ('e quella faccia / di là da lui, più che l'altre trapunta'; *Purg.* XXIV, 20–21).[47] The only contemporary pope whom Dante places in Paradise is Pope John XXI (b. 1210/1220; papacy 1276–77). No reference at all is given to his role as pope or to his papacy; instead, he is referred to as Peter of Spain ('Pietro Spano') and celebrated for his work of logic, the *Summulae logicales* (*Par.* XII, 134–35). Of the fourteen popes in Dante's lifetime, then, eight are apparently allotted a place in Dante's vision of the afterlife: of these, two were already in Hell in 1300 and two or three more are – we are informed – soon to follow. One, despite being a pope, gets into Purgatory through a late conversion; one is presented as the worst glutton on his terrace; and one, with no mention of his tenure as a pope, resides in Paradise as a celebrated logician.[48]

[45] See *Inf.* XIX, 31–87. See also *Par.* XXX, 142–48.

[46] In addition, Dante probably refers to Pope John XXII at *Par.* XVIII, 130–32: 'Ma tu che sol per cancellare scrivi, / pensa che Pietro e Paulo, che moriro / per la vigna che guasti, ancor son vivi' [But you who write only to strike out, remember that Peter and Paul, who died for the vine you are laying waste, are still alive]. Dante is probably alluding here to John XXII's interdicts against the Imperial party. See Peter D. Clarke, *The Interdict in the Thirteenth Century: A Question of Collective Guilt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[47] Dante alludes to the pope's drowning of eels in wine: 'e purga per digiuno / l'anguille di Bolsena e la vernaccia' [and by fasting he purges the eels of Bolsena and the vernaccia]. See also Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXIV, 21–24 and Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Purg.* XXIV, 19–24.

[48] The fourteen popes in Dante's lifetime (1265–1321) are as follows: Clement IV (1265–68), Gregory X (1271–76), Innocent V (1276), Adrian V (1276), John XXI (1276–77), Nicholas III (1277–80), Martin IV (1281–85), Honorius IV (1285–87), Nicholas IV (1288–92), Celestine V (1294),

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What underlies Dante's polemic against the popes of his day in his vision of the afterlife? His original, and striking presentation reflects more than a powerful sense that individuals are betraying their sacred office. Instead, Dante is arguing that the contemporary papacy is institutionally corrupt, and that it has lost its direction and betrayed its true purpose. Dante's scathing depiction of contemporary popes in the afterlife, like his innovative representation of pagans, forms part of a theological–political argument with direct relevance for his immediate audience. As Nick Havely emphasises, Dante wrote the poem (c. 1307–21) around the same time as controversies surrounding Franciscan poverty reached fever pitch: 'around 1309–12, when Clement V was formally investigating the Franciscan Spirituals; and from 1317 onwards, when John XXII was actively engaged in suppressing them.'[49] Davis adds, 'it is Dante's singling out of particular popes as protagonists of an epiphany of evil that seems to correspond most closely to the Spiritual Franciscan view of ecclesiastical corruption.'[50] There is, then, a pamphlet-like immediacy to Dante's poem, with its theological–political programme for the radical reform of the Roman Church.[51]

Dante's epistle to the Italian cardinals, written after Pope Clement V's death in 1314, reflects his direct engagement with contemporary events. It also provides a revealing commentary on the *Commedia*. In the epistle, Dante chastises the cardinals for despising the heavenly fire (the holy spirit which descended on the apostles at Pentecost), and for selling the doves in the temple, making a market of priceless spiritual goods (*Epist.* XI, 4). In his other-worldly vision, he places their contemporary leaders deep in hell: as counter-punishment (*contrapasso*), the tongues of flame, instead of informing their words, scorch their feet (*Inf.* XIX, 22–30). In the epistle, Dante castigates contemporary prelates for having their backs and not their faces to the chariot of the Church (*Epist.* XI, 4); on the terrace of avarice, he represents Pope Adrian V with his backside grotesquely turned towards

Boniface VIII (1294–1303), Benedict XI (1303–4), Clement V (1305–14), and John XXII (1316–34). Morgan erroneously states, first, that 'in his [Dante's] lifetime there had been six popes' (there were fourteen); second, that 'Giovanni XII, is allocated to Paradise' (it is John XXI); and, third, that 'Celestine V and Nicholas III suffer in Hell for simony' (Celestine V suffers in Hell as a neutral).

[49] Nick Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans: Poverty and the Papacy in the 'Commedia'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2.

[50] Davis, *Dante's Italy*, p. 63.

[51] Havely associates Dante's particular critique of contemporary popes with 'reformist apocalypticism': 'The idea of "repristination" of the Church was not itself new, but the call for the clergy to revert *ad pristinum statum* was renewed with particular intensity by apocalyptic writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' (Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans*, p. 185).

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Heaven (*Purg*. XIX, 97–99). In the epistle, Dante laments the despicable state of the Roman Church and the transfer of the papacy from Rome to Avignon in 1309 (*Epist*. XI, 1–4); in his poem, he presents an allegorical representation of the Church's moral corruption, and clearly alludes to the Babylonian captivity through the sacred chariot's detachment from the tree (*Purg*. XXXII, 100–60). The final vision of the 'whore' (*puttana*; 149 and 160) almost certainly refers to the papacy of Boniface VIII, while the 'giant' is conventionally interpreted to represent Philip IV, the successor to the French monarchy.[52]

Dante is equally forthright in highlighting the root causes underlying the Church's contemporary degeneracy: sloth and avarice. Where the Church fathers searched for God, the modern prelates, in their spiritual sloth, desire only riches and worldly power: each of them, Dante claims, has taken Cupidity as his wife ('Cupiditatem unusquisque sibi duxit in uxorem'; *Epist*. XI, 7). On both occasions that Dante treats sloth and avarice in the *Commedia* (implicitly in *Inferno* VII and explicitly in *Purgatorio* XIX), then, he splices these capital vices together, structurally dividing a canto in two. In both cases, he polemically associates these vices with clerics: in *Inferno* VII, *all* the avaricious are tonsured clerics, including popes and cardinals ('Questi fuor cherci . . . e papi e cardinali / in cui usa avarizia il suo soperchio'). In *Purgatorio* XVIII and XIX, Dante sandwiches the siren between two clerics: an abbot (the *only* slothful soul identified) and Pope Adrian V (the *first* soul whom Dante encounters in the terrace of avarice). The pope, as *successor Petri*, should be married to his flock (and the Church, as a whole, to Christ as *sponsa Christi*); instead, he is paired to a whore (the siren is, by some early commentators, simplify referred to as *meretrix hominum*). The papacy's avaricious assumption of temporal power was, for Dante, the principal institutional cause of moral evil: 'la vostra avarizia il mondo attrista, / calcando i buoni e sollevando i pravi' [your avarice afflicts the world, trampling the good and raising up the wicked] (*Inf*. XIX, 104). This underpinned his firm conviction that temporal and spiritual power should be divided between Empire and Church. Dante's condemnation of the contemporary papacy arguably reaches its climax in St Peter's denunciation of his current successors: in the eyes of the Son of God, the seat of the papacy is vacant, and his burial place has become a sewer (*Par*. XXVII, 19–63).[53]

[52] See, for example, Davis, *Dante's Italy,* pp. 29–30.

[53] Dante nonetheless held that Boniface VIII's papacy was legitimate, as is evident from *Purg*. XX, 85–90. For this important qualification, see also Davis, *Dante's Italy*, p. 64: 'St. Peter might

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Dante's afterlife is not just, however, a polemical vision of the contemporary church's corruption: it also presents a manifesto for reform. Thus, Dante's Paradise arguably presents an other-worldly vision for the material poverty and spiritual evangelism he envisaged for the Church on Earth. The first, fourth, and seventh of the planetary spheres emphasise religious orders: Piccarda and Costanza (in the first heaven of the Moon) were Franciscan nuns, 'Poor Clares', before being violently abducted from their cloister; St Thomas Aquinas and St Bonaventure (in the fourth heaven of the Sun) praise the founders of each other's orders, St Dominic and St Francis, while denouncing the subsequent degeneracy of their own; and St Benedict, the founder of Western monastic orders, and St Peter Damian, a rigorous reformer, extol the ascetic contemplative life in the seventh heaven of Saturn. The second and sixth spheres foreground the Empire and political justice. In the second sphere of Mercury, Dante locates the corruption of the papacy in the donation of Constantine, he upholds Justinian as an ideal emperor who reformed the civil law, and he models, in Pope Agapetus's spiritual counsel of Justinian (in the form of a correction of heresy), the appropriate relationship he envisages between pope and emperor. Moreover, Dante represents the conquests of the Empire (embodied in the Imperial Eagle) as Divinely willed, and he reiterates his strange theory of the Atonement, according to which the universal jurisdiction of the Roman Empire under Augustus was necessary for Christ to have died for all people.[54] In the sixth sphere of Jupiter, the dramatic appearance of Ripheus and Trajan, in the eye of the Eagle, highlights – as we have seen – the providential role of the Roman Empire in administering justice. Finally, the third and fifth spheres of Heaven emphasise the cooperation of the papacy and temporal power in the persecution of heresy (Folco combats the heretic Cathars) and the liberation of the Holy Lands through the crusades (Dante presents his crusading ancestor Cacciaguida as a martyr). Throughout *Paradiso*, Dante counterpoises the worldliness of the contemporary papacy with the asceticism of the early Church and of the monastic and mendicant orders.

complain in Paradise (supposedly in the year, ironically enough, of Boniface's Great Pardon) that his place was vacant in the eyes of the Son of God, but he was speaking only in a moral sense.'

[54] Guido Vernani ridicules Dante's bizarre argument that God's justice would not have been fulfilled were the Romans not the universal governors of the entire human race: 'Quis enim unquam tam turpiter erravit, ut diceret, quod poena debita pro peccato Originali, potestati alicuius terreni Iudicis jubjaceret?' [Whoever made such a disgraceful error as to say that the punishment due for original sin lay in the power of any earthly judge?]. See 'Vernani's *Refutation*', II, 101–2, in Cassell, *The Monarchia Controversy,* p. 188.

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The origins of the papacy in St Peter, of Western monasticism in St Benedict, and of the mendicant orders in St Francis were all characterised, Dante claims, by material poverty (*Par*. XXII, 88–93).

In *Paradiso*, Dante not only presents St Francis and his order as a model for the contemporary church, but also represents the pristine church in St Francis's image. Certainly, St Francis is given a unique prominence by Dante, named for the third time in the heavenly rose as second only to John the Baptist in the hierarchy of heaven.[55] In Dante's hagiography, St Francis is depicted as an *alter Christus*, and as a 'new sun' ('nacque al mondo un sole'; *Par*. XI, 50), Dante's symbol *par excellence* for God.[56] St Francis's mystic marriage with Lady Poverty juxtaposes Dante's representation of the contemporary prelates as married to Cupidity. Dante's panegyric is particularly striking for emphasising one detail: he claims that '[Lady Poverty], deprived of her first husband, had waited, scorned and obscure, without a suitor eleven hundred years and more until this man appeared' ('Questa, privata del primo marito, / millecent' anni e più dispetta e scura / fino a costui si stette sanza invito'; *Par*. XI, 64–66). In other words, Dante insists that St Francis was only the second (after Christ himself) to embrace poverty. How so? While many saints before St Francis had embraced poverty as a mistress, only Christ and St Francis, according to Dante, made poverty the 'mother' of their spiritual children, their followers or disciples. St Francis's first congregation could not own material wealth (or its buildings) and was granted only the 'use' of it by the Church. This singular regulation was confirmed by Pope Nicholas III's bull *Exiit qui seminat* (1279) but came under threat in the early 1300s and was effectively nullified one year after Dante's death, by Pope John XXII's bull *Ad conditorem canonum* (1322).

But it is precisely this model of Franciscan corporate poverty that Dante seems to envisage for the Church as a whole in *De Monarchia*. In that treatise, he argues that the Holy Roman Emperor (holding all temporal land and power) would cede the use, but not the possession, of wealth and buildings to the Church. By linking Christ and St Francis as the two husbands of poverty, he emphasises, once again in his *Commedia*, that Christ's followers, the Church, should follow him in institutional

[55] See *Par*. XXXII, 34–36: 'e sotto lui [Giovanni] così cerner sortiro / Francesco, Benedetto e Agostino, / e altri fin qua giù di giro in giro' [and below him in the same way Francis, Benedict, and Augustine have been assigned to divide, and others down to here from circle to circle].

[56] See also Davis, *Dante's Italy*, p. 49: 'St. Francis occupies a position just under St. John the Baptist. He could not be Christ's prophet, like John, but he was apparently, in Dante's opinion, Christ's most faithful imitator.'

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poverty.[57] This messianic theological–political programme, then, underpins Dante's depiction of the Christian afterlife from Virgil's prophecy of the 'veltro', who will chase the she-wolf of cupidity back down to Hell, through the apocalyptic prophecies in the Earthly Paradise, to his final representation of the blessed in the Empyrean.

The canonical and, even, 'timeless' status of Dante's *Commedia* in Western European literature may distract us from the historical immediacy of its theological–political polemic. But, as I have argued, Dante's otherworldly vision is best understood precisely in the context of the reforming, and sometimes radical, currents of his time. Dante seems to have believed that a final, definitive eschatology through the culmination of human history in the Second Coming was near.[58] Building on Morgan's seminal study, this chapter has shown that major innovations in Dante's otherworldly vision are direct consequences of his theological–political programme for this-worldly renewal and reform. Moreover, in line with those scholars who have emphasised a continuity between Dante's dualistic political thought in the *Monarchia* and in the *Commedia*, I have shown how this continuity is evident not only in terms of the doctrinal content but in the very structural organisation of Dante's afterlife.

In particular, this chapter has focused on two novel, and surprising, aspects of Dante's afterlife in relation to previous traditions about the other-world, both popular and learned: Dante's treatment of pagans and of contemporary popes. By simultaneously emphasising the exemplary moral virtue of certain pagans *and* insisting on their eternal damnation, Dante is arguing that man can attain a secular happiness through philosophical guidance alone. By making Virgil his guide, by carefully constructing Roman history as Divinely ordained, and by organising the sins of Hell according to rational principles ostensibly taken from Aristotle, Dante is insisting that only a restoration of the Holy Roman Empire may bring peace and justice. Dante's vision of the Christian afterlife is, as his scathing treatment of contemporary popes and prelates highlights, also a manifesto for radical reform of the Church. The structure of Purgatory and of

[57] Although Dante distances himself from schismatic Franciscan factions (*Par.* XII, 121–26), he is 'in one important way . . . more radical even than the Spiritual Franciscans. He thought that the clergy as a whole should have remained poor, and should have shunned all temporal jurisdiction, from the time of Christ to the end of history' (Davis, *Dante's Italy*, p. 52). Davis also notes the irony of Dante making Aquinas the spokesman for this view of St Francis and apostolic poverty, a view Aquinas had himself opposed in the *Summa theologiae* (Ibid., p. 50).

[58] Dante probably did not envisage the longevity of his poem's reception because he insists, in *Paradiso*, that the seats of the blessed are almost full with only a few souls still awaited in heaven ('vedi li nostri scanni sì ripieni, / che poca gente più ci si disira'; *Par.* XXX, 131–32).

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Paradise, as I have shown, reflects the kind of ecclesial reform he envisaged. Most strikingly, Dante not only appears to adopt Franciscan communal poverty as a model for the Church as a whole, but seems to believe that only a restoration of the Holy Roman Empire may bring about this reform by forcibly stripping the Church of its temporal power and material wealth. Even setbacks from the perspective of 1300, such as Pope Boniface VIII's worldly success and Henry VII's future imperial failure, are viewed as temporary, with Dante having us focus on the pope's and his successor's future damnation (*Inf.* XIX, 31–87; and *Par.* XXX, 139–48) and the emperor's eternal crown awaiting him in heaven (*Par.* XXX, 133–38)

In Morgan's taxonomy of the different kinds of other-worldly visions associated with different historical eras, she associates the Carolingian era with written representations of the other-world that are 'political and satirical in nature'.[59] Although Dante's poem shares other characteristics with many kinds of vision, it is worth stressing its political–satirical vein, which, I think, has been insufficiently examined in the critical tradition.[60] However, one decisive difference separates Dante's political satire from that of the Carolingian visions. Rather than the 'vision of the other world [becoming] a political weapon at the hands of the Church', Dante's other-worldly vision is decisively a political weapon for the Empire and, indeed, for his patron and the dedicatee of *Paradiso*, Cangrande della Scala, the leader of the Imperial faction in Italy. Whether Dante would have followed his patron in support of Louis of Bavaria's march into Italy in 1326, and his installation of the Spiritual Franciscan Pietro Rainalducci as Anti-pope Nicholas, is a matter of conjecture, as Dante died five years earlier.[61] What is beyond conjecture, in my view, is that his *Monarchia* and his *Commedia* were potent ammunition for that cause.

[59] See Morgan, *Dante*, pp. 1–4 (p. 3).

[60] For an interest in genre, and satire in particular, in relation to Dante, see, for example, the contributions in *Libri poetarum in quattuor species dividuntur: Essays on Dante and 'Genre'*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański, Supplement to *The Italianist* 15, 2 (1995). See especially Zygmunt G. Barański: '"*Tres enim sunt manerie dicendi* . . .": Some Observations on Medieval Literature, "Genre" and Dante', in Barański, Supplement to *The Italianist*, pp. 1–60; and Suzanne Reynolds, 'Dante and the Medieval Theory of Satire: A Collection of Texts', in Barański, Supplement to *The Italianist,* pp. 145–57. More recently, this line of enquiry has been taken up convincingly by Ambrogio Camozzi Pistoja. See, for example, Ambrogio Camozzi Pistoja, 'Profeta e satiro: A proposito di *Inferno* 19', *Dante Studies* 134 (2015), 27–45 and Ambrogio Camozzi Pistoja, '19. Inside Out', in Corbett and Webb (eds.),*Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, II, pp. 173–91.

[61] Cangrande declared his allegiance to Henry VII in December 1310 and was made an imperial vicar the following year; he was excommunicated by Pope John XXII on 6 April, 1318; and supported Louis of Bavaria in 1326. See Nick Havely, *Dante* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 43–47.

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PART II

Reframing Dante's Christian Ethics

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CHAPTER 3

Dante's Theological Purgatory
Earthly Happiness and Eternal Beatitude

This chapter presents Dante's *Purgatorio* as a penitential journey guided by Christian ethics towards God. In the first part, I counter a divergent reading, proposed most powerfully in recent scholarship by John A. Scott's monograph *Dante's Political Purgatory*.[1] According to Scott, the summit of Dante's Purgatory represents 'that very same Earthly Paradise, which for Dante reflected the happiness attainable through Justice and the teachings of philosophy'.[2] I argue that this now-dominant interpretation represents a false turning in Dante scholarship and propose, instead, that Dante represents the 'beatitudo huius vitae' delineated in the *Monarchia* through the limbo of the virtuous pagans in *Inferno* IV. As a corrective to the dominant 'political' reading, in the second part of this chapter, I explore how Dante forged his vision of Purgatory through two areas of distinctively Christian theory and practice that had risen to particular prominence in the thirteenth century: the newly crystallised doctrine of Purgatory and the tradition of the seven capital vices (or deadly sins) in penitential ethics.[3] In the third part, I argue that the region embodies an explicit reorientation from natural to supernatural ethics, from pagan to Christian *exempla*, and from this world to the heavenly

[1] Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*. Scott provides an invaluable account of the political background to Dante's Purgatory as well as many interpretative insights on specific passages of the *Purgatorio* (although, interestingly in this regard, he devotes as many chapters to Ante-Purgatory as to Purgatory proper). Nonetheless, this chapter seeks to refute Scott's central contention and overarching argument that Dante's Purgatory represents an ethical journey guided by 'justice and the teachings of philosophy' towards the '*beatitudo huius vitae*' (p. 189). For the influence of this widely held view, see Nicola Fosca, gloss to *Purg*. XXVII, 103–8.

[2] Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 189. My purpose in presenting afresh a 'theological Purgatory' is not, of course, to negate the importance of politics or philosophical teaching in Dante's Purgatory, but rather to argue that the ethical structure and characteristics of the region are, nonetheless, distinctively Christian.

[3] For a caveat to the more familiar phrase, see Boyde, *Human Vices*, p. 151: 'the Seven Capital Vices . . . their popular appellation – the Seven Deadly Sins – is wrong in everything but the number!'

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city. Thus, this chapter presents afresh a 'theological Purgatory', a moral pilgrimage guided by distinctively Christian ethics towards the *beatitudo vitae aeternae*.[4]

Two Contenders for the *Beatitudo Huius Vitae*: The Earthly Paradise in Purgatory and the Limbo of the Virtuous Pagans

According to the dualistic theory articulated in Dante's *Monarchia*, man has two ethical journeys in this life: a journey to a secular happiness achievable by following the teachings of the philosophers and the natural virtues (the domain of the Holy Roman Empire and temporal power) and a journey to an eternal beatitude achievable by following the teachings of Divine revelation and the theological virtues (the domain of the Church and spiritual power).[5] Until recently, as documented in Chapter 2, scholars classified the *Monarchia* as a minor work and considered its dualistic theory to represent a temporary stage in Dante's intellectual development, to be left behind by the time he wrote his major work, the *Commedia*. The new philological evidence, dating the *Monarchia* to Dante's intellectual maturity when most of the *Commedia* was already written, has opened up a revision of this dominant critical approach, with its tendency to view the relationship between Dante's prose works and the *Commedia* in terms of authorial palinode.[6]

At this important interpretative juncture, I believe that Dante criticism has taken a wrong turn. Scholars who have tried to read the *Commedia* in light of Dante's dualism have typically equated the secular happiness – the *paradisus terrestris* delineated in the *Monarchia* – with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Mount Purgatory. Thus John A. Scott correctly observes that 'all too often, Dante's poem has been regarded exclusively as a spiritual ascent to God, thus ignoring the totality of the poet's message, which is bent on leading humanity to both its goals, the one set firmly in this world (Virgil/Emperor → Earthly Paradise) and the other providing

[4] This chapter thereby builds on my argument in Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 147–73, and begins to deliver what I envisaged in the book's conclusion: 'A new dualistic reading of Purgatory would therefore reappraise the region in terms of the complex tradition of the seven vices in Christian moral psychology' (p. 178).

[5] Dante, *Monarchia*, III, xvi, 7–9.

[6] Albert Russell Ascoli, in *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), has sought to challenge this dominant 'evolutionary interpretation of Dante's literary career and intellectual biography, usually with the *Commedia* as ideal telos' (p. 276) and to prepare for a reading of the poem 'beyond the palinode' (p. 274).

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salvation and eternal beatitude'.[7] However, he then jumps to what is, in my view, the wrong conclusion: 'the answers, obvious as they are, need to be stated: yes, the Earthly Paradise is indeed to be found there, situated above Purgatory proper, and it is Virgil, the Aristotelianized poet of imperial Rome, who guides Dante there'.[8] On this reading, the summit of Dante's Purgatory represents not spiritual beatitude but rather secular, Earthly happiness: 'that very same Earthly Paradise, which for Dante reflected the happiness attainable through Justice and the teachings of philosophy'.[9]

As Nicola Fosca points out, a reading which equates the secular goal of Dante's *Monarchia* with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory is held by 'molti dantisti' and sustained by the authoritative Bosco-Reggio and Chiavacci Leonardi commentaries. He concludes, not unreasonably, that the *Monarchia* has had, thus far, a negative influence on interpreters of the *Commedia*.[10] Scott's own argument draws in particular on the thesis of Charles S. Singleton, an influential earlier twentieth-century proponent of a similar dualistic reading. Like Scott, Singleton argues that Dante-character, on reaching the summit of Mount Purgatory, attains only the 'rule of reason over the lower parts of the soul, of which Aristotle and Plato spoke'.[11] Singleton also similarly maps the scheme of the *Monarchia* onto the Mount of Purgatory: 'For in the poem is not Eden the first goal, and does Virgil not guide to Eden by the natural light of the philosophers? . . . is not the celestial paradise the end to which Beatrice leads, as the light of grace and revelation . . .? So that here too, in respect to the second goal, treatise and poem would seem to agree.'[12] Nonetheless Singleton recognises a flaw in such simple mapping: in the poem, unlike in the treatise, the first path is clearly subordinated to the second and leads to Beatrice.[13] Singleton is thereby constrained to present two Edens. In the Earthly Paradise, Leah and Rachel initially represent the active and contemplative aspects of a happiness attainable through natural philosophy (and the guidance of Virgil). They are then transfigured on the arrival of Beatrice: 'Virgil leads to a justice which the philosophers had discerned and he leads no further. Then beyond the stream, with Beatrice, come the four virtues

[7] Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 9. [8] Ibid., p. 64. [9] Ibid., p. 189.

[10] See Nicola Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XXVII, 103–8: 'Pare proprio che il trattato politico abbia esercitato un'influenza negativa sugli esegeti della *Commedia*.'

[11] Charles S. Singleton, *Journey to Beatrice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 65–66.

[12] Ibid., pp. 265–66.

[13] See also, however, Scott's nuancing of Singleton's position, in Scott, *Dante's Political Poetry*, n. 10, p. 257.

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which are the true perfection of the active life, that is, true justice. A Leah who is a *perfected* Leah thus comes with Beatrice. And so it must be with contemplation.'[14] Awkward interpretative complications thereby appear in what – at first – might seem an 'obvious' reading.

Dualistic readings which equate the Earthly Paradise of Purgatory with the secular happiness delineated in the *Monarchia* have also led to some interpretations entirely at odds with the commentary and critical traditions. Thus Peter Armour's reinterpretation of the griffin (traditionally identified as a figure for Christ) as the 'supreme temporal guide of mankind on earth . . . the Empire alone, the Empire of Rome' is underpinned by his conviction that the Earthly Paradise in Purgatory depicts 'the first of mankind's two God-given goals – that happiness in this life which, as every reader of Dante knows, is not in his opinion in any way within the sphere of competence of the Church'.[15] John A. Scott, in similar vein, berates the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* which 'still reports that "*All the commentators, both ancient and modern, are agreed in recognizing Jesus Christ in the griffin*"'.[16] But Scott's motive for a different interpretation is similarly underpinned by his identification of the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory with Dante's secular goal: 'It would surely have been strange if, in that very same Earthly Paradise, which for Dante reflected the happiness attainable through Justice and the teachings of philosophy, the poet had placed no signifier of the imperial office and its divinely appointed mission to guide the human race, *humana civitas*, to the *beatitudo huius vitae*.'[17] For it is not at all strange if the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory is *not* the 'very same Earthly Paradise' depicted in the *Monarchia*. Far from being obvious, Scott's dualistic reading requires an interpretation at odds both with the wider medieval context and with the commentary tradition of the *Purgatorio*.[18]

As I suggested in Chapter 2, there is another way to read the poem in dualistic terms which does not entail such revision of traditional

[14] Ibid., p. 134.
[15] Peter Armour, *Dante's Griffin and the History of the World: A Study of the Earthly Paradise (Purgatorio, cantos XXIX–XXXIII)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 69–70; p. 67.
[16] Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, pp. 188–89.
[17] Ibid., p. 189.
[18] With regard to the medieval context, Scott revealingly claims that 'no one before Dante had thought of setting up a figural link between the happiness attainable through good government . . . and the Earthly Paradise lost through original sin . . . Dante does not hesitate to subvert the myth of Eden [which was] seized upon and transformed by Dante's political vision . . . it became a "political" goal accessible in this life to the whole of humanity' (Scott, *Dante's Political Poetry*, pp. 66–67). With regard to the commentary tradition on Dante's Earthly Paradise Scott observes that 'All too often, the pageant described in *Purgatorio* XXIX has been seen solely as a representation of Holy Writ and a static vision of the ideal church' (p. 187).

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interpretations of Purgatory. I would argue that Dante's *Commedia* is indeed underpinned by his dualistic theory, but that Dante represents man's secular goal not in the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory but rather in his theologically original Limbo of the virtuous pagans (*Inf.* IV, 67–151). In the *Monarchia*, Dante depicts man's path to his temporal goal as directed by philosophical teachings which are to be put into practice through the moral and intellectual virtues ('per phylosophica documenta venimus, dummodo illa sequamur secundum virtutes morales et intellectuales operando'; *Mon.* III, xv, 8). The early commentators of *Inferno* IV unanimously interpret the seven walls encircling the noble castle of Dante's Limbo allegorically to represent philosophical teaching (most commonly the seven liberal arts) by which the rational soul liberates itself from the sensual appetite.[19] The seven walls of the Limbo of the virtuous pagans parallel and counter-balance, therefore, the seven terraces of Purgatory. Dante-character then encounters, within a beautiful landscape which directly alludes to Virgil's Elysian fields, exemplars of the moral and intellectual virtues. The first noble pagan named is Electra, the mythical founder of Troy and the root of the Trojan and Roman race which, for Dante, historically instantiates the true flower of moral virtue.[20] Amongst the 'spiriti magni' of the 'filosofica famiglia', Aristotle – *the* philosopher and the exemplar of human intellectual perfection – holds reign: 'il maestro di color che sanno' (*Inf.* IV, 119–32). Dante thereby represents the happiness of this life ('beatitudinem scilicet huius vite') which consists in man's natural perfection in its active and contemplative aspects, the operation of the moral and intellectual virtues ('virtutes morales et intellectuales operando'; *Mon.* III, xv, 7).[21]

[19] See Jacopo Alighieri, gloss to *Inf.* IV, 106–8: 'le sette mura le sette liberali arti significano, le quali di necessità essere convengono circostante al filosofo e poetico intelletto'. See also Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.* IV, 106–7: 'pro castro illo intelligit ipsam scientiam et genus scientiae, per istos VII muros, intelligit VII artes scientias liberales'. Although later commentators have suggested other readings, the consensus view of his first readers is that Dante allegorically represents the pathway of philosophy.

[20] See Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII, 134–37, in *Virgil*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), II, 2–367 (p. 68), and *Monarchia*, II, iii, 11–17. See also Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* IV, 121: 'ipsa [Electra] fuit radix nobilissimae plantae, scilicet trojani et romani generis; ideo autor, volens commendare nobilitatem utriusque gentis, incipit ab ista tamquam ab antiquo principio nobilitatis'.

[21] Although it might initially seem peculiar that Dante should locate in Hell an image of secular happiness, we should remember first, that the virtuous pagans occupy a luminous, open and verdant plain at Hell's summit ('in prato di fresca verdura'; *Inf.* IV, 111) and, second, that their only suffering – the loss of union with God – is shared by unbelievers in this life who may also attain a limited secular felicity. For a full development of the argument equating the secular happiness

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In the past, scholars have tended to start from the *Commedia* and then either, like Nardi, fail to see any trace of the dualism of the *Monarchia* or, like Scott, project Dante's dualistic theory of two ethical goals onto the – apparently obvious – two endpoints of Dante-character's journey: the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory and Paradise itself. By contrast, if we consider Dante-poet – fully committed to a dualistic vision of man's two ethical goals (as the later dating of the *Monarchia* confirms) – setting out to write the *Commedia*, we can easily imagine him confronting a stark paradox: how to represent a secular, this-worldly goal in a poem which depicts an other-worldly afterlife? In this light, Dante's innovative creation of the region of the virtuous pagans becomes clearly understandable. Regardless of their literal destiny and apparently unjustified deprivation of beatitude (the focus of most scholarly work on this area of Limbo), the virtuous pagans serve, for Dante, an urgent allegorical purpose because they respond precisely to this critical exigency: the virtuous pagan represents secular human flourishing in a poem which literally depicts the afterlife.

Political readings of Purgatory in terms of philosophical principles have been motivated, at least in part, by the attempt to map Dante's dualistic theory onto the eschatology of the *Commedia*. Even on their own terms, such dualistic readings – where the secular goal of Dante's *Monarchia* is equated with the Earthly Paradise at the summit of Purgatory – seem forced into internal contradictions and to yield some rather peculiar, or at least untraditional, interpretations. This is not the case with my alternative dualistic reading, in which Dante's Limbo of the virtuous pagans figuratively embodies this-worldly, ethical flourishing (the temporal goal of the *Monarchia*). My interpretation has two distinct advantages. First, it enables us to read the poem as informed by Dante's dualistic vision. Particularly in light of the recent philological evidence, the thesis of a radical shift in Dante's intellectual trajectory away from a dualistic ethical outlook seems unsustainable now. Consequently, we need to account in some way for the doctrine of two ethical goals (so prominent in the *Monarchia*) in the *Commedia*. Second, this alternative dualistic interpretation also defends more traditional readings of Purgatory. The interpretation of Dante's Limbo of the virtuous pagans, at the rim of Hell, as depicting Dante's this-worldly goal frees Purgatory and the Earthly Paradise from a forced, overly secular interpretation.

delineated in the *Monarchia* with the figure of the virtuous pagan in the *Commedia*, see Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 122–46.

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Thus far, we have removed one key obstacle to reading Purgatory in terms of Christian ethics: by providing an alternative location (the Limbo of the virtuous pagans) for Dante's this-worldly goal, I have shown how one can read the poem as informed by Dante's dualistic theory without reading the ethics of Purgatory as narrowly philosophical. In the second part of this chapter, I provide a re-examination of the immediate context of and inspiration for the genesis of Dante's Purgatory. In this way, I show how the moral and doctrinal context of the region's ethics is distinctively Christian and cannot be viewed within the frame of philosophical principles.

The Genesis of Dante's Purgatory

Le Goff claimed that 'Dante more than anyone else made Purgatory the intermediate region of the other world'.[22] An overemphasis on the originality of Dante's vision of Purgatory, however, may initially obscure its interpretation. After all, if we imagined that Dante invented his depiction of Purgatory in isolation, his structuring of it according to philosophical principles could be understood as consistent with the region's audacious novelty as a whole. There is, of course, clear evidence of originality. Some argue that, before Dante, the doctrine of Purgatory was relatively new, and, in Jeffrey Schnapp's words, 'little more than a theologian's abstraction'.[23] By contrast, Dante gave Purgatory a precise geographical location – in the southern hemisphere at the antipodes of Jerusalem. Moreover, he drew a completely new image of what this eschatological region of Purgatory might be like: not simply a monochrome corporeal fire, but a mountain divided into different regions with different punishments.[24] However, his work also contains much content which per se is not original at all. If we were to recast the moral framework and much of

[22] See Jacques Le Goff, 'The Poetic Triumph: The *Divina Commedia*', in Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 334–55 (p. 346). For the development of the doctrine of Purgatory, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

[23] Jeffrey T. Schnapp, 'Introduction to *Purgatorio*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 91–106 (p. 92).

[24] Alessandro Scafi's study, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (London: British Library, 2006), gives an excellent account of the geography and cartography of Purgatory before and after Dante. Even with regard to his eschatological landscaping, Scafi notably emphasises that Dante's originality lies more in the manner of his material's elaboration than in the material itself: 'the poem voiced the geographical and cosmographical knowledge of his age, even though Dante elaborated it in a strikingly original manner' (p. 182).

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the doctrinal material of Dante's Purgatory into another medieval genre – viewing it not as a vision of the afterlife realm of Purgatory, but as a treatise on Christian ethics, a homiletic handbook or an allegorical moral journey set in this life – it would appear much more familiar. That is, there are clearly discernible contexts which Dante uses in constructing the moral and doctrinal content of Purgatory. I shall examine two of these contexts in turn: the newly crystallised doctrine of Purgatory and the well-established resources of the tradition of the seven capital vices in medieval Christian ethics.

Although the Church had given an official stamp to the doctrine of Purgatory only at the Council of Lyon in 1274, the existence of an intermediate realm, between Hell and Paradise, was well established by Dante's lifetime.[25] At a practical level, the *suffragia mortuorum* ('masses, prayers, alms and pious works by which the living assisted the souls of the dead from purgatorial pains') were integral to medieval religious life.[26] At a theoretical level, medieval theologians – citing passages from Scripture stating that sins would be tested, punished, or cancelled by fire on the day of judgement – had put the flesh and blood on the doctrine of Purgatory. Outside vision literature, however, theological description of the region remained distinctively unimaginative, depicting it as a purgatorial fire. Aquinas, for example, gives a clear rationale for Purgatory. Mortal sin turns man away from God as his ultimate end. Through repentance, sinners are 'brought back to the state of charity, whereby they cleave to God as their last end' and, freed thereby from the eternal punishment of Hell, they merit 'eternal life'.[27] Through venial sin, man does not turn away from his ultimate end but does err with regard to the means leading him to God. Although venial sin may be expiated by the fervent Divine love of particularly holy souls, the general rule is that venial sin, like mortal sin, retains the debt of temporal punishment even after due repentance.[28] The primary purpose of penance, therefore, is to repay this debt. In addition, penance has a curative purpose: the sinner must be cured from vice and made virtuous and holy. What, then, of a person who

[25] For a short introduction to the theology of Purgatory, see Robert Ombres, *Theology of Purgatory* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1978). In the book's second part, Ombres appeals to Dante's *Commedia* because it provides 'some actual, successful examples of the kind of poetic and symbolic realisations the doctrine of Purgatory can sustain' (p. 51). For a brief overview, see Peter Armour, 'Purgatory', in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. by Richard Lansing (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 728–31.

[26] Armour, 'Purgatory', p. 728. [27] Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, 181, in *Corpus Thomisticum*.

[28] See Aquinas, *De malo*, 7, a. 11, co., in *Corpus Thomisticum*.

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dies before being able to complete his or her penance? And what of those – all bar the most exceptional saints – who die before becoming holy and virtuous if, as Aquinas states, 'no one is admitted to the possession of eternal life unless he is free from all sin and imperfection'?[29] The afterlife region of Purgatory responds, as a theological necessity, to both these questions: it completes the debt of sin and it cleanses the soul of imperfection. Whereas the intensity of purgatorial punishment corresponds to the debt (the sinner's guilt), the length corresponds to the soul's imperfection (the 'firmness with which sin has taken root in its subject').[30] The twofold pain of Purgatory – the delay of the divine vision (*poena damni*) and the corporeal fire (*poena sensus*) – is thus spiritually necessary. Furthermore, as with earthly penance, this satisfaction is desired by the souls as their means to restore friendship with God.[31]

Dante thus inherited some key doctrinal points about Purgatory but, for its description, he inherited only a generic condition, the corporeal fire. This left him with considerable imaginative freedom to describe and structure his own depiction of Purgatory. Why, then, did he choose the

[29] Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae*, 182, 'In aliis autem oportet per aliquam poenam huiusmodi peccata purgari, quia ad vitam aeternam consequendam non perducitur nisi qui ab omni peccato et defectu fuerit immunis.'

[30] *Quaestio de Purgatorio,* 8, p. 521b, in Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 5 vols., ed. by Institutum Studiorum Medievalium Ottaviensis (Ottawa: Commissio Piana, 1945), V, *Supplementum tertiae partis*: 'dicendum quod acerbitas poenae proprie respondet quantitati culpae; sed diuturnitas respondet radicationi culpae in subiecto'. It is misleading to maintain that, in the traditional view, 'the idea of moral discipline is inapplicable to the afterlife' (see *Purgatorio*, ed. by Durling and Martinez, p. 10). The author of the *Supplementum* explicitly leaves scope not only for 'temporal punishment', but also for curative moral discipline so that the stain and root of vice are removed. To describe this purgatorial punishment, Aquinas nonetheless resorts to the customary 'corporeal fire', a punishment which is doubly painful: at an intellectual level because the spiritual soul recognises itself to be imprisoned within an inferior substance; and at a physical level because – through God's mysterious power – the spiritual soul, although incorporeal, actually experiences the corporeal pain of the fire (see Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae*, 180: 'Et hoc ipsum considerandum a spirituali substantia, quod scilicet creaturae infimae quodammodo subditur, ei est afflictivum [...] Inquantum vero ignis cui alligatur, corporeus est, sic verificatur quod dicitur a Gregorio, quod anima non solum videndo, sed etiam experiendo ignem patitur').

[31] *Quaestio de Purgatorio,* 3, p. 517a, in Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*: 'Dicendum quod in purgatorio erit duplex poena: una damni, inquantum scilicet retardantur a divina visione; alia sensus, secundum quod ab igne corporali punientur.' This also explains the difference in kind between infernal punishment (*poena exterminans*) and purgatorial punishment (*poena corrigens*). Whereas the punishment in Hell 'has no cleansing force' because the souls 'lack charity', the souls in Purgatory 'are adorned with charity, by which their wills are conformed to the divine will; it is owing to this charity that the punishments they suffer avail them for cleansing' (*Compendium Theologiae*, 182: 'ex cuius caritatis virtute poenae quas patiuntur, eis ad purgationem prosunt: unde in iis qui sine caritate sunt, sicut in damnatis, poenae non purgant, sed semper imperfectio peccati remanet, et ideo semper poena durat'). See also Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 7, a. 11, co.

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tradition of the seven capital vices? It seems at first glance an odd choice, as we might reasonably expect the seven vices to structure Dante's Hell. But, as we saw in Chapter 1, Dante does *not* structure Hell according to the vices: the vices of pride, envy, and sloth are not mentioned explicitly in the *Inferno*, and the other four vices (lust, gluttony, avarice, and wrath) are categorised, ostensibly in line with Aristotle's *Ethics*, as sins of incontinence, occupying just one part of Hell (and only five of thirty-four cantos). A principal reason for Dante's choice is that the tradition of the seven capital vices had come to play a dominant role in thirteenth-century Christian ethics, homilies, and confessional practices.[32] In response to the renewed emphasis on confession encouraged by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215–16), preachers found in the theory of the seven capital vices a popular and psychologically productive approach to moral evil.[33]

The scheme of the seven capital sins is both simple for a beginner and immensely rich in terms of psychological depth and complexity. The focus is not just on sins committed but, crucially, on character traits or tendencies which need to be corrected in the Christian's moral journey in this life.[34] It is natural to suppose that many Christians (Dante included) may have structured their own confessions through this morally transformative scheme.[35] Dante could draw on direct literary precedents such as Brunetto Latini's *Il Tesoretto* which, like the *Commedia*, begins in the wood of sin and closes with the author confessing the seven capital sins in causal order and admonishing his reader to do the same.[36] Widely diffused treatises on the vices were also available, such as, most significantly (as we shall explore in Chapter 4), that by the Dominican William Peraldus. Moreover, the vices and corresponding sets of virtues were central to the

[32] See, for example, Newhauser and Ridyard (eds.), *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*.

[33] Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215–16), 'Omnis utriusque sexus' commands every Christian to confess his or her sins at least once a year. See Siegfried Wenzel, 'Preaching the Seven Deadly Sins', in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard. G. Newhauser (Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), pp. 145–69 (p. 150).

[34] To cure the vices was to cure the very roots of all sinful actions and thoughts, because vice is to sin as habit is to act. See, for example, Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia 2ae 71, 2 ad 4: 'peccatum comparatur ad vitium sicut actus ad habitum'.

[35] For a recent introduction to the development of confession, see Robert Rusconi, *L'ordine dei peccati: la confessione tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002).

[36] Brunetto Latini, *Il Tesoretto*, 2555–57: 'Ond'io tutto a scoverto / Al frate mi converto / Che m'a penitentiato.' In *Il Tesoretto*, Brunetto links 'accidia' especially with the failure of religious belief and practice (2695–744) while, in the *Tresor*, he substitutes 'mescreance' [disbelief] for sloth, and orders the vices and their various offshoots differently (Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, II, 131, p. 628: 'Les criminaus pechés sonot. vii.: superbe, envie, ire, luxure, covoitise, mescreance et avarice. . . . de mescreance naissent malice et petit coraige, desesperance, peresce, desconoissance, non porvoiance, sotie et delit de mal').

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popular Christianity of Dante's immediate cultural context, as is clear from model sermons of the time or the ethical use of the vices in visual culture.[37] For example, Alan of Lille's outline of the appropriate content (faith and morals), audience (public), and material (the use of authorities) in preaching; his emphasis on the use of examples (which make doctrine more familiar and, thereby, more efficacious); and his chapters on each of the vices and corresponding virtues in the overarching context of Christian confession and penitence provide a telling parallel with Dante's approach in the *Purgatorio*.[38]

In light of this wider context, we can readily understand why the penitential tradition of the vices appealed to Dante as he envisaged the terraces of Purgatory, but not when he organised the circles of Hell. Penance makes sense of three key doctrinal purposes of Purgatory: (1) it realigns the soul from a disordered pursuit of earthly goods to God as its ultimate end; (2) it repays the debt for sin; and (3) it frees the soul from all vice and imperfection. These purposes are equally true of the Purgatorial afterlife as of Christian penance in this life (for which an extensive literature existed).[39] Dante, therefore, projects the familiar ethical material on the seven capital vices onto the unfamiliar context of Purgatory. The result is, at a literal level, a vivid depiction of an otherwise uncharted

[37] For example, Alan of Lille gives model sermon material on each of the seven vices and on corresponding virtues in his 'Summa de arte praedicatoria'. He then uses the seven vices and corresponding virtues as the basic structure in his sermon material on confession and penitence: 'Septem ergo principalibus vitiis, septem principales virtutes sunt opponendae. Contra superbiam, humilitas; contra invidia, charitas; contra iram, patientiae longanimitas; contra acediam, mentis hilaritas; contra avaritiam, largitas; contra crapulam, sobrietas; contra luxuriam, castitas' (p. 174b [99]). The influence of Alan of Lille on Dante has tended to focus, tantalisingly, on *Anticlaudianus* and *De planctu naturae.* See, for example, the entry and bibliography in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, I, pp. 89–91: 'sono appunto questi scritti [il *De planctu naturae* e *L'Anticlaudianus*] che hanno maggiore interesse per gli studiosi di questioni dantesche' (p. 90). However, the influence of Alan of Lille's work on the virtues and vices could be, for a reading of Dante's Purgatory, of similar interest (although such scholarship is constrained by the fact that Alan of Lille's treatise of that name, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, remains unpublished).

[38] See Alanus de Insulis, 'Summa de arte praedicatoria', pp. 111.c. [53]–114.c [55]: 'Praedicatio est, manifesta et publica instructio morum et fidei, informationi hominum deserviens, ex rationum semita, et auctoritatum fonte proveniens . . . Infine vero, debet uti exemplis, ad probandum quod intendit, quia familiaris est doctrina exemplari.'

[39] Alan of Lille explicitly compares the suffering of earthly penitence to Purgatory as two kinds of purgatorial fire: 'Est autem duplex ignis purgatorium, unus in via scilicet poenitentia, alius post vitam scilicet purgatoria poena' (Alan de Insulis, 'Summa de arte praedicatoria', p. 174d [100]). He exhorts the sinner to the first fire (in this life) because its pain will be but a shadow of the pain otherwise experienced in the second fire of Purgatory: 'Primus enim purgatorius, quasi umbra est et pictura secundi; quia, sicut umbra et pictura materialis ignis nullum infert dolorem sed ipse ignis materialis cruciatum vel adorem infert; sic ignis poenitentiae nihil habet amaritudinis juxta secundi purgatorii comparationem. Quia, ut dicit Augustinus, poena purgatorii multo gravior est qualibet temporali' (p. 175b [100]).

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eschatological region – Purgatory – and, at an allegorical level, a representation of Dante's Christian ethics: the very guidance on an individual's journey to spiritual salvation which Dante felt the institutional Church of his time, misdirected by its grasp of temporal power, was failing to administer.

From This World to the Heavenly City

The Christian context of penance strongly suggests that Dante's Purgatory is anything but a philosophically guided journey to a temporal happiness 'of which Aristotle and Plato spoke'. Nonetheless, the fact that it is Virgil, rather than Beatrice, who guides Dante-character through Purgatory and that it is Virgil who expounds, as in the corresponding episode in Hell (*Inf.* XI), the moral structure of Purgatory (*Purg.* XVII) has led many Dante scholars to conclude that the moral doctrine he espouses is therefore philosophical.[40] Such a view had previously been strengthened by the lack of a direct source for Dante's apparently original organisation of the vices. Despite Siegfried Wenzel's intervention, which located Virgil's discourse within the context of penitential Christian ethics, the view persists that the doctrine espoused by Virgil is within the bounds of pagan thought.[41] For many reasons, however, such a view is unsustainable.

First, Dante sets the entire discourse on the vices within the overarching context of the relationship of love between the Creator and His creation, between God ('l fattore') and man ('sua fattura'). As Dante highlights through the voice of Marco Lombardo in the previous canto, each soul is created in simplicity and ignorance and is thereby easily led astray by lesser goods from God (its chief good):

[40] For example, Fosca quotes Giacalone's view: 'La tecnica delle distinzioni è medievale, ma la sostanza del ragionamento e della dottrina morale è ancora aristotelica. Il Purgatorio è distinto secondo il *lumen naturale* di Virgilio' (Nicola Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 97–102). But this is overly crude as Fosca, citing Pietrobono, emphasises: 'Per quanto concerne Virgilio, bisogna sempre tener presente che il vate latino "né accorre in aiuto di Dante di sua spontanea volontà, né adempie alla sua missione con le sue sole forze . . . Virgilio non muove, è mosso; non comanda, obbedisce"' (Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XXVII, 103–8). That is, although Virgil tells Dante-character at the gateway to the Earthly Paradise that he has guided him through Purgatory by the power of his natural intellect ('ingegno') and his knowledge or art ('arte'), we must remember that Virgil also demonstrates clear knowledge of revealed truths including the mystery of the Incarnation (*Purg.* III, 34–45) and that reason responds to, and is led by, revelation in this canticle.

[41] See Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory*, p. 189; see also John A. Scott, 'The Moral Order of *Purgatorio*', in John A. Scott, *Understanding Dante* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2004), pp. 195–97.

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Esce di mano a lui che la vagheggia
prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla
che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,
l'anima semplicetta, che sa nulla,
salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore,
volontier torna a ciò che la trastulla.
Di picciol bene in pria sente sapore;
quivi s'inganna, e dietro ad esso corre
se guida o fren non torce suo amore.
(*Purg.* XVI, 85–93)

[From the hand of him who desires it before it
exists, like a little girl who weeps and laughs childishly,
the simple little soul comes forth, knowing nothing except that,
set in motion by a happy Maker, it gladly turns to what amuses it
Of some lesser good it first tastes the flavour; there it is deceived
and runs after it, if a guide or rein does not turn away its love.]

The ethical principle is that each soul, created by God, has an inbuilt desire to return to Him. This principle is epitomised by the opening of Augustine's *Confessions*: 'fecisti nos, Domine, ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te' [God, you made us for you, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you].[42]

Furthermore, the souls in Purgatory are explicitly directed from the earthly to the heavenly city. Indeed, as Jesus's Sermon on the Mount counterpoises our earthly life with God's kingdom (Matthew 22: 36–40), so, on Mount Purgatory, the beatitudes provide spiritual nourishment for the penitent souls and direct them to the eternal happiness in the life to come.[43] As the philosopher Ralph McInerny, commenting on Dante's use of the beatitudes, affirms:

> Jesus begins his sermon with the beatitudes. One cannot think of a more dramatic way of showing that the New Law is not the Old Law, nor is it simply a repetition of the teaching of philosophers. The beatitudes fly in the face of our natural assumptions about human life … Far from being a

[42] The language of Augustine is even more explicitly evoked in the first words of Dante-character in *Paradiso* I: 'Già contento, *requïevi*' (*Par.* I, 97), a speech directly preceded by the latinism 'a quïetarmi' (*Par.* I, 86).

[43] For analyses of Dante's use of the beatitudes, see Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi, 'Le beatitudini e la struttura poetica del *Purgatorio*', *Giornale storico della letteratura Italiana* 101 (1984), 1–29; Sergio Cristaldi, 'Dalle beatitudini all'*Apocalisse*: il Nuovo Testamento nella *Commedia*', *Lettere classensi* 17 (1988), 23–57; and V. S. Benfell, '"Blessed Are They That Hunger after Justice": From Vice to Beatitude in Dante's *Purgatorio*', in *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals*, ed. by Richard Newhauser (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 185–206.

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> distillation of natural moral wisdom, the Sermon on the Mount seems to stand natural wisdom on its head.[44]

McInerny highlights the 'enormous difference' between 'morality or ethics – philosophical or natural accounts of how life should be led' and 'Christian revelation', between the broadly philosophical organisation of Dante's *Inferno* and the distinctively Christian ethics of the *Purgatorio*.[45]

This ethical reorientation from the secular to the spiritual is evident from the first two terraces which purge the gravest vices of pride and envy:

> È chi, per esser suo vicin soppresso,
> spera eccellenza, e sol per questo brama
> ch'el sia di sua grandezza in basso messo;
> è chi podere, grazia, onore e fama
> teme di perder perch'altri sormonti,
> onde s'attrista sì che 'l contrario ama.
> (*Purg.* XVII,115–20)

[There are those who hope for supremacy through their neighbour's being kept down, and only on this account desire that his greatness be brought low;
there are those who fear to lose power, favour, honour, or fame because another mounts higher, and thus are so aggrieved that they love the contrary.]

The proud pursue excellence not to magnify God like Mary but, rather, to exalt themselves and to put down their neighbour: the 'superbus' literally wants to walk above others ('nam superbire non est aliud, quam super alios velle ire').[46] The envious are saddened by the excellence of others lest it diminish their own and, instead of desiring good for their neighbour (as Mary desires that there be more wine at the Marriage of Cana), they take pleasure (spite) in their neighbour's failures and misfortune. In both cases, the end is hatred of one's neighbour.

Crucially, the root of pride and envy is the competitive pursuit of temporal goods and status. Indeed, Dante links pride and envy by listing four kinds of earthly things – power, favour or fortune, honour, and fame (*Purg.* XVII, 118) – by which people may measure themselves against others. As such temporal goods are finite, our own pursuit of them implies that our neighbour will have less (which may lead to pride – the desire to put down one's neighbour), while our neighbour's pursuit of them implies that we will have less (which may lead to envy – sadness at our neighbour's good). As Guido del Duca exclaims in the terrace of envy, 'O gente umana

[44] Ralph McInerny, *Dante and the Blessed Virgin* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), p. 49.
[45] Ibid., p. 48. [46] Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 115–17.

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perché poni 'l core / là 'v' è mestier di consorte divieto?' [O human race, why do you set your heart where sharing must be forbidden?] (*Purg.* XIV, 86–87).

By contrast, spiritual goods multiply the more they are shared. Thus truth, goodness, or love do not diminish from being shared but, like a ray of light in a mirror, increase in each person (*Purg.* XV, 70–72). Freedom from the twin vices of pride and envy is only possible, therefore, when the soul is directed away from the competitive pursuit of secular attainments and instead towards God as its ultimate end. Having witnessed the proud souls punished bent over double by massive boulders, Dante exclaims:

> O superbi cristian, miseri lassi,
> che, de la vista de la mente infermi,
> fidanza avete ne' retrosi passi,
> non v'accorgete voi che noi siam vermi
> nati a formar l'angelica farfalla
> che vola a la giustizia sanza schermi?
> Di che l'animo vostro in alto galla,
> poi siete quasi antomata in difetto,
> sì come vermo in cui formazion falla?
> (*Purg.* X, 121–29)
>
> [O proud Christians, weary wretches, who, weak in mental vision, put your faith in backward steps,
> do you not perceive that we are worms born to form the angelic butterfly that flies to justice without a shield?
> Why is it that your spirit floats on high, since you are like defective insects, like worms in whom formation is lacking?]

Dante-character encounters Omberto Aldobrandesco, who took pride in the *past* (his noble ancestors); Provenzan Salvani, who took pride in the *present* (his political dominance of Siena); and Oderisi, who took pride in the *future* (his artistic glory). All this pride is short-sighted – the proud are 'weak in mental vision' – because beyond the corruptible world in time (subject to past, present, and future) is the eternal perfection of the heavenly city. As Sapia reminds Dante in the terrace of envy, she was only a pilgrim in Italy because everyone is a citizen of the true city: 'ciascuna è cittadina / d'una vera città' (*Purg.* XIII, 94–96). Christians, therefore, must not place their hope in earthly prowess and happiness (their 'backward steps').[47] Nothing by which one may puff oneself up in this life will

[47] L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Purg.* X, 121–29: 'La quale [superbia] fa porre loro la speme nelle potenzie mondane.'

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avail the immortal soul (the butterfly), which must leave its corruptible body (the chrysalis) at death and return to its Creator for judgement. Christians, as pilgrims in this life, should thus fix their sight on their immortal destiny and fly to God, rather than remain defective in the pride of the flesh ('like worms in whom formation is lacking').[48]

The early commentators emphasise that Dante's invective against the 'proud Christians' underscores the fact that the realm of Purgatory (and the Christian pilgrimage of penitence in this life) is explicitly unavailable to pagans.[49] Indeed, this ethical direction would be completely alien from a pagan perspective, as its demands surpass the requirements of the natural law. When it comes to the disordered love of lesser goods (avarice, gluttony, and lust), the souls in Purgatory are not directed to a virtuous mean as in natural ethics, but rather to the supernatural ethical goals of poverty, abstinence, and chastity. Furthermore, their ultimate goal is not intellectual contemplation of the truth (the speculative perfection of Aristotelian ethics), but, through embracing the cross and suffering of Christ, the union of their souls with God in the beatific vision.

Notably, Virgil's doctrinal speech at the centre of the canticle does not give a specific explanation of the quiddity of the three vices of excess, ostensibly because it is good for Dante-character, combatting sloth, to discover it for himself.[50] This delay also allows Dante-poet, with typically caustic irony, to save the explanation of avarice for Pope Adrian V. A key point of this episode, equally for the institutional Church as for the individual Christian, is that the way to God – the corresponding virtue to avarice – is not the prudent or just distribution of temporal goods (appropriate to the secular sphere of conduct), but rather radical poverty. Poverty, to be spurned according to natural ethics, must be actively desired by those seeking the kingdom of Heaven. Pope Adrian V explains that avarice had extinguished his love for every good: his soul, fixed down on earthly things ('le cose terrene'), had been unable to taste heavenly things ('in alto'; *Purg.* XIV,

[48] Augustine, *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor*, I, 13: 'Omnes homines de carne nascentes, quid sunt nisi vermes? Et de vermibus [Deus] Angelos facit.'

[49] Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Purg.* X, 121–23: 'qui esclama contra la superbia, e dice in particolare *cristiani*, imperquello che d'altra legge non va in Purgatorio, con ciò sia che altra generazione non si può salvare'; Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* X, 121–23: 'Unde dicit: *O superbi cristiani*, notanter dicit christiani, quia infideles ad purgatorium non veniunt'; Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* X, 121–29: 'Dice così: *O superbi cristian*; ecco che dirissa lo parlare suo pure ai cristiani: imperò che a stato di penitenzia et al purgatorio non vanno se non li cristiani.'

[50] See also *Conv.* III, v, 20: 'sì come omai, per quello che detto è, puote vedere chi ha nobile ingegno, al quale è bello un poco di fatica lasciare' [as now, based on what has been said, anyone can see who has a noble intelligence, which should be allowed to make a little effort].

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115–23). By contrast, St Francis took Lady Poverty as his bride, opening up an ever-increasing divine love: he was, as Dante states in *Paradiso*, seraphic in love ('serafico in ardore'; *Par.* XI, 28–117 (37)).

The overarching Christian ethical reorientation from natural to supernatural ethics is further emphasised in the ensuing description of gluttony. In Hell, the blind intemperance of gluttony (the failure of reason to moderate the appetite to the food necessary for a person's health) is eternally punished. In contrast, in Purgatory, the souls are directed to a completely different moral order. The goal here is not bodily health (as a constituent of human flourishing), but rather holiness ('qui si rifà santa'; *Purg.* XXVIII, 66). The weeping souls sing the verse 'Labïa mëa, Domine' of the penitential psalm *Miserere* – their lips are directed from the satisfaction of sensual appetite to the praise of God ('et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam'). The souls in Purgatory endure an enforced fast: they circle a tree whose fruits, unreachable, nonetheless let off a powerful scent, which intensifies their hunger and thirst. Their faces are so dark, hollow, and wasted that the skin is shaped by their bones; their eye sockets are like rings without gems and, framing an emaciated nose, clearly spell 'omo' [man] (*Purg.* XXIII, 22–25). This is hardly readjusting to the Aristotelian virtuous mean with regard to eating and drinking.[51] Instead, this extreme bodily fasting leads the souls – entirely over and above the order of natural ethics – to spiritual union with Christ:

> E non pur una volta, questo spazzo
> girando, si rinfresca nostra pena:
> io dico pena e dovria dir solazzo,
> ché quella voglia a li alberi ci mena
> che menò Cristo lieto a dire '*Elì*,'
> quando ne liberò con la sua vena.
> (*Purg.* XXIII, 70–75)

[51] Benfell addresses the relationship between the Aristotelian mean and the extreme demands of the supernatural law in Benfell, 'From Vice to Beatitude': 'This "moderate virtue" (or "golden mean") seems to contradict the ethics taught by Christ in the New Testament, which in many cases seem to embrace extreme notions of virtue' (p. 191). Yet Benfell, somewhat strangely, describes Purgatory in terms of a reconciliation between the Aristotelian mean and the extreme demands of the supernatural law: 'The extreme of one vice (gluttony) is purged and balanced by forcing the gluttonous over to the other extreme of complete abstinence from food, hoping thereby to create a properly temperate disposition. In addition, it is possible to view the purgative processes of all the terraces of Mount Purgatory, with their respective actions that are aimed at correcting the will, as fundamentally Aristotelian in that they are directed towards the establishment of virtuous habits' (p. 202). However, this implies that the Aristotelian mean is the goal, whereas, as Benfell concedes, famous ascetics 'are explicitly praised' (p. 202). A more natural reading is simply that, in contrast to the emphasis on the virtuous mean with regard to the sins of incontinence in Hell (an explicitly Aristotelian scheme), Purgatory enacts the call to Christian holiness which surpasses the demands of the natural law.

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> [And not just once, as we circle this space, is our pain renewed:
> I say pain, and I should say solace,
> for that desire leads us to the tree that led Christ to say 'Eli' gladly,
> when he freed us with the blood of his veins.]

Despite the extreme agony and the humiliation of the cross (according to his human nature), Christ joyfully cries 'Eli' ('My God') and submits to the Divine will because of his love for humankind (redeemed through his sacrifice). Likewise, the penitent souls intensely desire to come to the heavenly city and, as the pain (their cross) is the means to their eternal salvation, it is now – for them – solace.[52] In Dante's geographical symbolism, the penitents join themselves to Christ's cross in Purgatory at the exact antipodes of Jerusalem, the place of Christ's crucifixion. It is Christ, therefore, who provides the moral path – the *via crucis* – in Purgatory. The souls, inspired by the promise of the beatitudes and embracing their penitential suffering, are made ready for the kingdom of God. Moreover, Dante explicitly compares these souls in Purgatory to pilgrims ('i peregrin pensosi') who, in this life, must do penance of abstinence and fasting for the sake of the heavenly kingdom.[53]

In this chapter, I have argued that the interpretation of a 'political Purgatory' in terms of philosophical principles represents a false turning in twentieth-century Dante scholarship. The motivation for such a reading, at least in part, was the desire to interpret the poem through Dante's dualistic theory. Scholars who equate the secular, this-worldly goal described in the *Monarchia* with the earthly paradise at the summit of Purgatory naturally seek to equate the philosophical guidance described in the *Monarchia* with the ethics of the *Purgatorio*. The first step in my argument, therefore, has been to dispute such a dualistic reading. In itself, this is not particularly new. After all, many scholars have considered that

[52] The agon embodied in Christ's cry is a paradigmatic site, theologically, for the perfect union in Christ of the human and the divine natures. Christ's forty-day fast in the desert demonstrated that his appetite was always obedient to his reason, while his acceptance of the cross demonstrated the obedience of his human will – which would naturally recoil from death and suffering – to the divine.

[53] The early commentators, including Benvenuto, naturally compare such Purgatorial pain to the voluntary penance of those seeking to purge themselves form the vice of gluttony in this life. Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXIII, 70–75: 'et cum hoc vehementer desiderant ad patriam pervenire, et ad hoc auxilium optant ab aliis'. See also Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XXIII, 25–75: 'auctor . . . describendo penam quam dicit animas pati in Purgatorio propter peccatum gulae in fame et siti, fingit se hic nunc vidisse has umbras ita macilentas et in occulis obscuras et cavas etiam, ut dicit textus, quod forte posset reduci allegorice etiam ad illos homines qui in hoc mundo viventes in satisfationem huius vitii gulae cum abstinentiis et ieiuniis, quasi se purgando simili modo extenuati apparent'.

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such a parallel is mistaken. In contrast to them, I have not thereby concluded that there is no evidence of Dante's dualistic theory in the *Commedia* – a conclusion that is all but untenable if, as the modern philological evidence suggests, Dante's intellectual trajectory had not radically shifted away from this theory by the time he wrote the *Commedia*. Rather, I have presented an alternative way to read the poem in dualistic terms: the Limbo of the virtuous pagans represents the journey by philosophical teaching to moral and intellectual flourishing in this life; the seven terraces of Purgatory represent the spiritual journey to eternal beatitude (*beatitudo vitae aeternae*). The immediate Christian context of Dante's depiction of Purgatory reinforces this reading. The use of the seven capital vices in thirteenth-century penitential practice served perfectly the literal and moral purpose of Dante's Purgatory: it literally describes the temporal punishment and purification of saved souls after death, and it allegorically represents the spiritual penance which all Christians should undergo on their pilgrimage to God in this life. As I have shown, the ethics of Dante's Purgatory are distinctively Christian and outside the purview of philosophical principles: the penitent souls are directed from this world to the heavenly city, from the virtuous mean to the radical demands of the supernatural law.

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CHAPTER 4

Two Traditions of Christian Ethics
Aquinas and Peraldus

In Chapter 3, I argued that Dante's Purgatory represents figuratively the moral journey of Christian penance to heaven (the *beatitudo vitae aeternae*), in opposition to a predominant 'secular' reading in twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship. Even scholars who have interpreted the ethics of Purgatory as distinctively Christian, however, have typically turned to Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* to gloss Dante's approach to the seven capital vices. In this chapter, I show that the moral theology of Dante's Purgatory is, instead, drawn from Peraldus's widely diffused and extremely influential treatise *De vitiis*. This is highly significant for understanding Dante's poem, because Aquinas and Peraldus adopted very different approaches in their treatment of the vices and virtues. In the first part of the chapter, I set out the pastoral exigency to reform, and provide a new rationale for, the ethical scheme of the seven capital vices. In the second and third parts, I provide a comparative critique of Peraldus's and Aquinas's approaches to this reform. In this way, I am able to highlight the characteristics – including the weaknesses – of Dante's poetic treatment (which clearly follows Peraldus's treatise). The parallel in ethical content between Peraldus and Dante is matched, furthermore, by a parallel in form: Peraldus's *De vitiis* invites us to imagine Dante assuming, in Purgatory, the role of a vernacular preacher against vice, with the reader envisaged as a Christian sinner.

Organising the Seven Capital Vices

The tradition of the deadly sins or capital vices takes its Christian origin from the desert fathers. For Evagrius Ponticus, the eight 'evil thoughts' reflect the full arsenal of the devil through which he attempts to attack the monk in the desert.[1] The earliest form of organising the vices seems to

[1] See Columba Stewart, 'Evagrius Ponticus and the "Eight Generic *Logismoi*"', in Newhauser (ed.), *In the Garden of Evil*, pp. 3–34.

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have been as a causal series. This model was introduced to the West by John Cassian, for whom the vices 'are linked among themselves by a certain kinship and, so to speak, concatenation' (*Collationes*, v. 10).[2] Like Ponticus, Cassian orders the vices from the carnal to the spiritual: first gluttony, which leads to lust; from lust comes avarice; from avarice wrath: from wrath sadness; and from sadness sloth. The monk's moral development may itself lead to the final, most severe vices of vainglory and pride: in other words, after overcoming each of the six vices, the monk is tempted to set himself up above others.[3]

Ultimately, however, it was the order established by Gregory the Great which would become standard in the Latin West. Like the desert fathers, Gregory underlined the causal connection between the seven capital vices. Unlike them, Gregory gave priority to the spiritual over the carnal vices; he added envy to the list, conflating, in the process, *tristitia* (sadness) and *acedia* (sloth); and he made pride the root of all. So, for Gregory, the first vice, vainglory, begets envy because in seeking an empty renown, the soul feels envy towards one able to obtain it; the last vice, lust, is caused by gluttony, as the inordinate consumption of food disposes the soul to sexual wantonness.[4] Allied to his reforming zeal and concern with evangelisation, Gregory's authoritative ordering of a system of Christian ethics around the seven capital vices had an enormous influence on the medieval Church. Thus, for example, Peter Lombard's *Sentences* – the theological textbook for the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries – simply states that 'it is well known that there are seven capital or principal vices, as Gregory says on Exodus, namely vainglory, anger, envy, sloth or sadness, avarice, gluttony, lust'.[5] The whole moral abyss of sin is then pegged onto this skeleton structure: 'From these, as if from seven springs, all the deadly corruptions of souls emanate. And these are called capital because from them arise all evils.'[6]

Nonetheless, obvious theoretical problems arose with the system of the seven vices. Notably, it was difficult to find seven virtues to oppose them. A standard medieval grouping of the virtues into the cardinal (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) and the theological (faith, hope, and

[2] See Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research', *Speculum*, vol. 43: 1 (1968), 1–22 (p. 4). See also Carole Straw, 'Gregory, Cassian, and the Cardinal Vices', in Newhauser (ed.), *In the Garden of Evil*, pp. 35–58.

[3] See Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali: Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), pp. 181–84.

[4] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, xxxi, 45, 89.

[5] Lombard, *The Sentences*, book 2, dist. 42, chap. 6 (264), 210.

[6] Ibid.

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charity) does not provide a meaningful parallel with the seven vices. Likewise, the proposed lists of seven remedial virtues ran into conceptual difficulties.[7] Moreover, the list seemed to exclude such primary and pressing vices as faithlessness and heresy.[8] Theologians experimented, therefore, with alternative systems of classification, each of which had distinct advantages over the list of seven vices.[9] The sins of thought, word, and deed conveniently parallel the three stages of confession: compunction (of heart), confession (of mouth), and satisfaction (through actions). The three concupiscences (of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life) have strict biblical foundation (I John 2:16) and map onto the desires of the body, the desire for external goods, and the mind's desire to raise itself above others. In addition, the decalogue gives a more comprehensive account of the moral law in its positive dimension.

Why, then, did these alternative models not displace the system of the seven vices? Why, instead, were they actually incorporated into and assimilated by it? The reason is not theoretical clarity, but rather pastoral effectiveness. The system of the vices was, quite simply, more popular and more memorable. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) formally impelled all Christians to confess their sins to a priest at least once a year; the scheme of the seven vices gave each individual layman a simple, but potentially rich structure to his or her moral life. Indeed, preaching on the seven capital vices became 'commonplace in sermons following the Fourth Lateran Council'. Medieval theologians did not, in other words, start from the drawing board. Whether they liked it or not, the ethical model of the seven capital vices was ingrained in the practices and cultural imagination of medieval laypersons.

Thus, the theoretical exigency moved from replacing the system altogether to reforming it from within. One key area for development was in the organisation of the vices: there were clear limitations in a simply causal account (with one vice leading to another in a linear series). Theologians therefore adopted new rationales for the vices based on

[7] See, for example, Wenzel's analysis of Grosseteste's sophisticated schema, according to which the seven remedial virtues are considered as the mean between two extremes of vice (the seven capital vices and seven further opposing vices), in Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins', p. 11.

[8] See Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins', p. 14, n. 57: 'In *De tentationibus et resistentiis*, for example, William [of Auvergne] declares: "Many people have divided the vices . . . into seven . . . But these people talk . . . as if faithlessness and heresy were no vices, or as if faith were not a virtue. Don't you accept their divisions".'

[9] Casagrande and Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali*, pp. 181–224, provide a detailed account of the debates about alternative systems of classification of the vices.

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human psychology and even on cosmology or symbolism.[10] It is within this wider context that we may productively compare the approaches of Peraldus and Aquinas.

Peraldus and the Augustinian Theory of Disordered Love

Of the two Dominicans William Peraldus (c. 1200–71) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), Peraldus is now barely known, whereas Aquinas, canonised and a doctor of the Church, is one of the most persistent influences on Catholic philosophy and theology. During their lives, however, it was a different story. A decree required that every Dominican convent hold a copy of Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* in its library, and this work – as the number of extant manuscripts testifies – was widely diffused across the whole of Christian Europe.[11] Dominican friars were expected to know Peraldus's *Summa* 'inside out' and to be able to recite, on demand, any chapter or title from the work.[12] The second part of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* would only supersede Peraldus's treatise as *the* Dominican handbook for moral theology and pastoral care in the late

[10] Wenzel notes that 'a major aspect of the history of Seven Deadly Sins which has as yet not received sufficient attention is the scholastic analysis of the scheme. Bloomfield deliberately excluded "theology" from his study, which is a pity because the theological discussion about the scheme from approximately 1130 to 1275 is one of the most interesting phases in the history of the sins' (Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins', p. 3).

[11] See Leonard Boyle, 'The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of Saint Thomas', in Leonard Boyle, *Facing History: A Different Thomas Aquinas* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Collège Cardinal Mercier, 2000), pp. 65–91. Humbert of Romans stipulated in his *Liber de instructione officialium* a list of books which each Dominican house must hold ready to hand. As Boyle notes, '"Scientific" theology, in so far as it occurs on the list, is represented by Raymund's *Summa de casibus* and the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* of Peraldus, the two well-springs, as it happens, of Dominican practical or "moral" theology' (p. 78). A chapter of the Province of Spain at Toledo in 1250, moreover, 'ordered each house in the Province to inscribe its name on its copies of breviaries, Bibles and these two *Summae*. In 1267 the two *Summae* are again mentioned in one breath at a Chapter at Carcassonne of the Province of Provence. Some five hundred manuscripts of the *Summa* of Peraldus are extant' (p. 83). See also 'Notes on the Education of the Fratres Communes in the Dominican Order in the Thirteenth Century', in Leonard Boyle, *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200–1400* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), VI, 249–67 (p. 257); and Humbert of Romans, *Opera*, ed. by J. J. Berthier (Rome: A. Befani, 1888–1889), 2 vols., II, p. 265.

[12] See M. Michèle Mulchahey, 'Aids to the Confessor: Manuals of Moral Theology', in M. Michèle Mulchahey, *"First the Bow Is Bent to Study . . .": Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), pp. 527–52: 'The friars were supposed to know both [Peraldus's] *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* and [Raymond of Penafort's] *Summa de casibus* inside out, they were to be able to recite from whatever chapter or title within these works they might be asked to, just as they should know the Gospels and the letters of St Paul like the backs of their hands. The one would help them preach repentance, the other to serve as responsible confessors to those whom they had converted with their words' (p. 541).

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fourteenth century.[13] Given the authoritative status of Peraldus's *Summa* even beyond Dominican circles, we can be confident that Aquinas knew it well. It is also plausible, as Leonard Boyle suggests, that Aquinas presents the second part of his *Summa* as, specifically, an improvement on and even a corrective to Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*.[14]

William Peraldus – a prior of the Dominican Order in Lyon – composed his treatise on the vices (*De vitiis*) around 1236; his treatise on the virtues appeared early in 1249.[15] From the mid-thirteenth century, the two treatises began to circulate together. Peraldus's *De vitiis* is perhaps best described as an anthology of resources on each of the seven vices to be used by Dominicans in preaching and confessing.[16] It is a treasure trove of quotations from Scripture, the Church authorities (especially the Latin fathers) and the classics (with a preference for the moralists Cicero and

[13] See John Inglis, 'Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues: Rethinking the Standard Philosophical Interpretation of Moral Virtue in Aquinas', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 27 (1999), 3–27: 'In the generation before the appearance of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, no treatise on moral virtue was as frequently used in Dominican circles as Peraldus's *Summa*' (p. 7). But even in the later fourteenth century, the chancellor Jean Gerson could remark that, 'if all the books in the world were to disappear suddenly and only Peraldus's summae survived, the loss would be tolerable' (cited in Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', 531). The main diffusion of Aquinas's *Secunda secundae*, meanwhile, seems to have occurred through second-order influence: 'In spite of the great number of manuscripts of the *Secunda secundae* itself for the years 1300–1500, it is probably fair to state that it was largely through the *Summa confessorum* of John of Freiburg or derivatives such as the popular *Pisanella*, that the moral teaching of St. Thomas in the *Secunda secundae* became known and respected all over Europe in that period' (see Boyle, 'The Setting of the *Summa*', p. 90). See also 'The *Summa Confessorum* of John of Freiburg and the Popularization of the Moral Teaching of St. Thomas and of Some of His Contemporaries', in Boyle, *Facing History*, pp. 37–64: 'the *Summa confessorum* was *the* Dominican manual in as much as it had distilled the moral teaching of the greatest of the Dominican theologians, and had placed it at the disposal of a vast audience' (p. 64). In addition, see Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, pp. 547–52.

[14] See Boyle, 'The Setting of the *Summa*', pp. 83–85: 'His [Aquinas's] point of departure, and possibly the chief target of his strictures on works in this area, was, I suspect, the great and, by his time, hallowed *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* of his senior colleague, William Peraldus or Peyraut' (p. 83). Boyle does not develop in detail the parallels between the two works, and it would be interesting to do so. See Leonard Boyle, 'The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas – Revisited', in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. by Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), pp. 1–16 (pp. 9–11).

[15] Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, p. 540.

[16] Ibid., pp. 540–42: 'Peraldus's *Summa* gave the confessor a means of identifying sin and its opposites theologically, objectively, and in its universal manifestations. . . . But there was yet more to the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus*. In both parts of his tract Peraldus uses the topics he introduces, whether virtue or vice, as a springboard to lessons in how the material can be preached' (p. 541). Wenzel also underlines the importance of Peraldus's *Sermones* in which he 'mentions "septem vitia" or "septem capitalia vitia" several times, on one occasion even as one of five catechetical set pieces, on another as the seven heads of the apocalyptic dragon. The seven standard sins are listed as opposed by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, as seven demons named in scripture, and as seven bonds by which the donkey on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem is bound' (Wenzel, 'Preaching the Seven Deadly Sins', p. 157).

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Seneca). It contains lists of *exempla* (principally from the New and Old Testaments) with pithy accounts of their lives and the moral lesson drawn, as well as memorable similes, images, and extended metaphors (for example, with regard to the mountain of pride).[17] In the longer and more comprehensive chapters, detailed manifestations of each vice are treated as well as aspects of a vice which are specific to a given sector of society. For example, a section is devoted to the evil of cloistered religious ('claustrales') taking pride in magnificent buildings: as they are dead to the world, a sepulchre is more fitting for them than a palace.[18]

A brilliant anthology of resources for use in preaching and confessing, Peraldus's *De vitiis* is not a tightly organised account of the vices to be read in sequential order: in the treatise, structure is subordinated to practical utility. After a short section on vice in general, Peraldus treats gluttony and lust. He moves on to a major tome on avarice not for a formal reason, but, more crudely, because of utility: 'After the vices of gluttony and lust, we shall speak of avarice because a treatise on this vice is more useful to preaching than a treatise on any of the other vices.'[19] Chapters on sloth, pride, envy, and wrath follow, and Peraldus concludes with a separate part on the sins of the tongue. Despite the unconventional order of his treatise, Peraldus does nonetheless open his fifth chapter on pride – the root sin – with a rationale for the seven capital vices as a whole. And it is this which interests us here.

Peraldus starts from Augustine's understanding of virtue as ordered love and of vice as disordered love: 'Sicut virtus secundum Augustin[um] amor est ordinatus: sic vitium est amor inordinatus.'[20] This *locus classicus* comes shortly after Augustine's depiction of the two cities in *De civitate Dei*: 'Two cities, then, have been created by two loves: that is, the earthly city by love of self extending even to contempt of God, and the heavenly city by love of

[17] Mancini, 'Un *auctoritas* di Dante', p. 97: 'In effetti il Peraldo è un compilatore formidabile, abilissimo nel far coesistere il nuovo e il vecchio testamento, citazioni letterali (o transunti) da scrittori classici e da padri della Chiesa, derivazioni da bestiari e lapidari, glosse, esempi, dialoghi, favole, credenze popolari, etimologie, proverbi, massime, immagini e similitudini.' See also A. Dondaine, 'Guillaume Peyraut, vie et oeuvres', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, xviii (1948), 162–236 (p. 191).

[18] See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, c. 22, p. 285b: 'Specialiter deberent cohibere claustrales a superbis aedificiis ista quae sequuntur. Primo hoc, quod cum ipsi sint iam mortui mundo, necessaria sunt eis sepulchra potius quam palatia.'

[19] Ibid., t. iv, pa. 1, c. 1, p. 51a: 'Post vitium gulae et luxuriae dicemus de vitio Auaritiae: quia tractatus de vitio isto utilior est praedicationi, quam tractatus aliorum vitiorum.'

[20] Ibid., t. vi, pa. 1, p. 213a.

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God extending to contempt of self.'[21] Virtue is rightly ordered love; rightly ordered love is love of the Creator.[22] A more precise taxonomy of love of God and its disorder is found in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*. Misdirected love, he writes, has four species: first, to love what is not desirable; second, not to love what is desirable; third, to love some lesser thing too much; and fourth, to love two things the same where one is more or less desirable.[23] Peraldus simplifies Augustine's schema and divides disordered love into two main categories: love of an evil (*amor mali*), which may correspond to Augustine's first category, and perverted love of a good through excess or deficiency (*nimius vel nimis parvus*) which, when expanded, conflates Augustine's second, third, and fourth categories.[24]

Considering first the disordered love through excess or deficiency, Peraldus distinguishes two kinds of good: lesser goods (temporal and corporeal) and great goods (grace and meritorious works).[25] The excessive love of lesser goods is the root of gluttony, lust, and avarice.[26] The deficient love of great goods is the root of sloth.[27] Peraldus's attempt to explain the three further vices – pride, envy, and anger – in terms of the genus 'love of evil' (*amor mali*) is less straightforward. Augustine, nonetheless, had once again shown the way. The sinner, Augustine notes, desires self-aggrandisement: to set himself up above his fellow men. Such self-love, Augustine affirms, is better called hate because we fail, in this

[21] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XIV, xxviii, 1–4, p. 451: 'Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo, terrenam scilicet amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei, caelestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.'

[22] Ibid., XV, xvii, 29–35, p. 488: 'Creator autem si veraciter ametur, hoc est si ipse, non aliud pro illo quod non est ipse, ametur, male amari non potest. Nam et amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus qua vivitur bene. Unde mihi videtur, quod definitio brevis et vera virtutis ordo est amoris; propter quod in sancto cantico canticorum cantat sponsa Christi, civitas Dei: *Ordinate in me caritatem*.'

[23] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, ed. by Joseph Martin (Turnholt: Brepols [Corpus Christianorum Series Latina], 1962), I, xxvii, 2–7, p. 22: 'Ipse est autem, qui ordinatam habet dilectionem, ne aut diligat, quod non est diligendum, aut non diligat, quod diligendum est, aut amplius diligat, quod minus diligendum est, aut aeque diligat, quod vel minus vel amplius diligendum est.'

[24] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 1, p. 213a: 'Est enim inordinatus, si sit amor mali. Licet etiam amor boni sit, est tamen inordinatus, si sit nimius vel nimis parvus.'

[25] Ibid.: 'Quaedam autem bona sunt parva, scilicet temporalia seu corporalia: quaedam vero magna: ut sunt bona gratiae et bona gloriae.'

[26] Ibid.: 'Amor vero parvi boni inordinatus est, si sit nimius. Et iste amor videtur esse radix in vitio gulae, luxuriae, et avaritiae.' Of the three vices of excess, Peraldus distinguishes avarice from lust and gluttony because the lesser good is desired as a possession, whereas with the other two vices it is desired insofar as it is pleasurable. Finally, he distinguishes gluttony from lust by its respective sense: gluttony primarily deals with taste, lust with touch.

[27] Ibid.: 'Amor ergo magni boni inordinatus est, si sit parvus. Et talis amor videtur esse radix in vitio acediae. Acedia enim videtur esse parvus amor magni boni; unde et tepiditas vocatur.'

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way, to love appropriately our neighbour who is, by nature, on a level with us.[28] As the desire to be exalted implies the humiliation of one's neighbour, pride is, albeit indirectly, the love of someone else's evil.[29] Nevertheless, Peraldus acknowledges that – properly speaking – hatred of neighbour is found in its pure form only in the vices of anger and envy.[30] With anger, the cause of hatred is external (in another); with envy, the origin of hatred is internal (the self). He who is angry hates another and desires retribution because of an evil suffered. Thus, Peraldus defines anger as the desire for revenge ('appetitus vindictae').[31] The hatred consequent upon envy, by contrast, has its evil in the self ('a propria malitia'). The recognition of another's excellence leads neither to praise nor to emulation, but rather to sadness and the purely negative desire that evil should happen to one's neighbour so that his or her excellence is diminished.[32]

Peraldus's account of gluttony, lust, avarice, and sloth in terms of disordered love through excess or deficiency does fit naturally, I would suggest, within the wider Augustinian framework of a distorted relationship between man, the goods of creation, and the Creator. As Augustine puts it, the lower goods of this world must be used on our journey to the heavenly kingdom; if our desire for them is disordered, we get left behind and may even turn back altogether from the pursuit of our true happiness.[33] In addition, this rationale gives a sense to what, at first, might seem

[28] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, I, xxiii, 17–18, p. 18: 'Talis autem sui dilectio melius odium vocatur'; I. xxiii. 25–27, p. 19: 'Cum vero etiam eis, qui sibi naturaliter pares sunt, hoc est hominibus, dominari affectat, intolerabilis omnino superbia est.' Likewise, Peraldus highlights the natural equality of men: alongside a common biological descent in Adam and Eve, each soul is created by God directly. See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, c. 28, p. 290b: 'omnes sumus ex eodem patre, et ex eadem matre: non legitur Dominum fecisse unum Adam argenteum, unde essent nobiles, et unum luteum, ex quo essent ignobiles: sed unicum de luto plasmavit, ex quo omnes eximus. Unde si aliquis ex hoc solo nobilis est, quia ex nobili patre aut nobili matre: aut omnes erimus nobiles, aut omnes ignobiles: quia aut parentes primi fuerunt nobiles, aut ignobiles.' In addition to this shared biological descent, Peraldus emphasises that each soul is created directly by God. See Ibid., t. vi, pa. 3, c. 29, p. 291b: 'Nunquid non Deus unus creavit nos? quare ergo despicit fratrem suum unusquisque vestrum?'

[29] Ibid., t. vi, pa. 1, p. 213b: 'in superbiae peccato est amor proprii boni cum alieno malo. Amat enim superbus sui exaltationem et proximi deiectionem.'

[30] Ibid.: 'in peccato vero irae et invidiae est amor alieni mali pure.'

[31] Ibid.: 'in peccato irae amor alieni mali ortum videtur habere a malo alterius. Ille enim qui irascitur alicui, ideo ei vult malum, quia malum ab eo recipit. Ira enim est appetitus vindictae.'

[32] Ibid.: 'In peccato vero invidiae amor alieni mali ortum habet a propria malitia, scilicet a superbia. Invidus enim ideo vult malum alterius, ne ille sibi parificetur.'

[33] See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, I, iv, 4–18, p. 8: 'Quomodo ergo, si essemus peregrini, qui beate vivere nisi in patria non possemus, eaque peregrinatione utique miseri et miseriam finire cupientes in patriam redire vellemus, opus esset vel terrestribus vel marinis vehiculis, quibus utendum esset, ut ad patriam, qua fruendum erat, pervenire valeremus; quod si amoenitates itineris et ipsa gestatio vehiculorum nos delectaret, conversi ad fruendum his, quibus uti

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the haphazard organisation of Peraldus's treatise as a whole. Peraldus begins with the three vices which involve an excessive desire for created things: gluttony, lust, and avarice. He then moves to the vice of sloth which involves an insufficient love of the Creator, the greatest good.

Peraldus's attempt to fit the vices of pride, envy, and anger into an overarching Augustinian scheme of ordered and disordered love is, however, less convincing. Pride has only an indirect relation to the general category: love of a neighbour's evil. After all, the debasement of a neighbour is a potential consequence of – rather than the primary motive for – disordered self-love. With regard to anger, Peraldus's definition fails to distinguish adequately between, on the one hand, the righteous indignation at a wrong suffered with the desire for just retribution and, on the other, an unbounded hatred of a person irrespective of the limits of justice. Furthermore, Peraldus's definition of the quiddity of envy – as motivated by the desire to bring down a person to one's own level – seems overly reductionist.

Peraldus's rationale takes up only a very small part of his treatise. As we have seen, the work's primary purpose is pastoral: to provide his Dominican *confrères* with an anthology of resources for preaching and confessing the seven capital sins. Nonetheless, the inadequacy of the Augustinian theory of disordered love to provide a convincing psychological framework for all seven vices left an obvious area of improvement for a successor in his order.

Aquinas's Positive Moral Psychology for the Seven Vices

Aquinas's contrasting approach to the vices in *De malo* is already apparent from his introductory etymology of the term 'capital vice'. What makes a vice capital, for Aquinas, is that it has an end chiefly desirable as such, so that other sins are subordinated to it. For example, an avaricious person may commit the sin of fraud in order to acquire money.[34] Where the starting point of Peraldus's rationale for the capital vices is disordered love, Aquinas differentiates each capital sin with regard to good objects which may be desired or avoided. There are, he argues, three kinds of good

debuimus, nollemus cito viam finire et perversa suavitate implicati alienaremur a patria, cuius suavitas faceret beatos, sic in huius mortalitatis vita peregrinantes a domino, si redire in patriam volumus, ubi beati esse possimus, utendum est hoc mundo, non fruendum, ut invisibilia Dei, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciantur, hoc est, ut de corporalibus temporalibusque rebus aeterna et spiritalia capiamus.'

[34] Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 8, a. 1, resp.

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objects which are desired: goods of the soul, goods of the body, and goods consisting in external things.[35] The sin of pride aims at the goods of the soul: the excellences of honour and glory. The sins of gluttony and lust aim at the goods of the body: the preservation of the individual (through nutrition) and of the species (through sexual intercourse). The sin of avarice pertains to the goods consisting in external things. By contrast, the three remaining capital vices – sloth, envy, and anger – concern goods which are avoided because they present some kind of obstacle to another good inordinately desired. The sin of sloth (*acedia*) is an aversion to the good in itself (God) because, in seeking God, the soul is impeded in its desire for physical tranquillity or bodily pleasure. The sin of envy is an aversion to the good of another insofar as it diminishes one's own excellence.[36] Finally, the sin of anger comprises a resistance to the good of justice because it prevents the inordinate vengeance desired.

Let us now consider the advantages of Aquinas's framework with regard to two vices – gluttony and lust – which naturally fit into Peraldus's Augustinian schema and with regard to two vices – pride and anger – which proved for Peraldus especially problematic. Peraldus classifies gluttony and lust in terms of the excessive desire for the secondary good of pleasure. Aquinas, by contrast, reframes the two vices in terms of virtuous desires for goods of the body. For Peraldus, gluttony and lust are differentiated by their primary sense (taste and touch); for Aquinas, they are differentiated in relation to the purposes of each desire: preserving the individual through nutrition and preserving the species through sexual intercourse. Aquinas's approach creates room for insufficient desire for food and drink (as in the case where someone desires to consume too little) and insufficient desire for sexual intercourse (Aquinas's example is a husband who abstains from sexual intercourse, thereby failing to fulfil his marital duty). For Aquinas, it is the respective purposes of the goods of the body which set the rule for temperance, the virtuous mean. Food is necessary for the nutritive power of the vegetative soul; pleasure in its consumption is, therefore, natural. Gluttony resides, instead, in the sense appetite – it is, more precisely, the immoderate sensual desire to consume food. The generation and education of offspring is the purpose of the sexual organs; pleasure in sexual acts ordered to this end is, therefore,

[35] Ibid., q. 8, a. 1, resp.

[36] Aquinas's differentiation based on the kind of movement of the soul enables a substantial distinction between pride and envy, even though the object – honour and glory – is the same. Envy is the aversion to the good of another because it is an impediment to one's own good (Ibid., q. 8, a. 1, ad 5).

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natural and good. Lust concerns any sexual act which is not properly related to the begetting of offspring. In addition, as the effective education of offspring requires the mutual cooperation of parents, Aquinas argues that every sexual union outside the law of marriage is also lustful.[37] For Peraldus, then, the sins of gluttony and lust are related directly to an excessive desire for pleasure. In contrast, for Aquinas, these sins are related to the disorder which occurs when the good is not related to its proper end or ends. One further advantage of measuring the desire not by quantity, as in Peraldus, but by right reason is that this approach enables Aquinas to relate more effectively the acquired virtue of temperance to its infused counterpart, the natural to the Divine law. Thus, for example, Aquinas clarifies that virginity or celibacy is not contrary to sexual desire as an extreme. Although, before Christ's coming, human and Divine law prohibited abstinence in order to multiply the human race, in the period of grace in which Christians are obliged to pursue spiritual growth, the celibate life is more perfect.[38]

Let us now turn to the vices of pride and anger, which Peraldus struggles to fit convincingly into his adaption of the Augustinian schema of disordered love. Peraldus locates pride negatively within the genus of hatred of one's neighbour (alongside envy and anger). Aquinas, by contrast, reconfigures pride in relation to the excellences of honour and glory, reflecting his broader insight that every sin is based on a natural appetite for some good. In pursuing excellence, Aquinas affirms, a person seeks likeness to God's goodness: the natural desire for excellence is, therefore, a good as not only humans but all created beings seek their own perfection. This positive reframing has four distinct advantages. First, Aquinas contextualises pride (as excess) and pusillanimity (as deficiency) in relation to the virtuous mean of magnanimity (the pursuit of excellence in accordance with reason and God's command). Second, he links the vice of pride to the faculties of the human soul: the intemperate desire for excellence derives from the irascible appetite; the prior judgement that such excellence is one's due derives from the rational will.[39] Third, Aquinas allows for three principal species of pride: to desire an excellence beyond one's measure (presumption); to attribute an excellence attained to one's own merits or to God but given because of one's merits; and to seek to hold an

[37] Drawing an analogy with the presence of monogamy in certain animals where rearing is shared between male and female, Aquinas argues that the law of marriage was instituted to prohibit promiscuous copulation which, by preventing the father from being identified, damages mutual cooperation in the education of offspring (Ibid., q. 15, a. 1, resp.).

[38] Ibid., q. 15, a. 2, ad 13. [39] Ibid., q. 8, a. 3, ad 7.

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excellence exclusively even where the excellence is a kind to be shared by others or by all.[40] Finally, Aquinas's broad definition creates a natural connection between pride, as the excessive desire for excellence, and the vice of vainglory, as the excessive desire to manifest one's excellence.[41] By contrast, Peraldus's account of pride lacks a positive moral teleology and a convincing anthropology; its definition – 'setting oneself up and debasing others'– is extremely narrow, corresponding, if at all, only to the third species outlined by Aquinas; and its classification in terms of 'hatred of neighbour' is very remote indeed from 'glorying in one's own merits', a primary characteristic, for Aquinas, of vainglory.[42]

A major problem with Peraldus's account of anger – as, simply, the desire for revenge – is that it leaves little space for a potentially positive emotion. In his own treatment, Aquinas takes – as his starting point – a debate amongst the ancient schools of philosophy about whether there might be a positive kind of anger. The stoics had argued that all anger is evil; the peripatetics, that some anger is good.[43] For Aquinas, the stoics failed to distinguish the two kinds of appetite – of the rational will and of the sense appetite – pertinent to anger. Considering only the latter, the stoics classified anger as an evil, reasoning that all emotions, of the sense appetite, upset the order of reason. The peripatetics, by contrast, showed that even the sense emotion of anger may be a good. Although the spontaneous emotion of anger arising from an injury always clouds our judgement to some extent, anger – both of the sense appetite and of the rational will – may also follow upon our judgement; as such, it is an 'instrument of virtue' which helps the person to execute justice more readily.

Where Peraldus fails to disentangle the ambivalent emotion of anger (simply characterising it as a vice), Aquinas distinguishes the good and evil aspects of anger in relation to its end with two further terms: zeal is the emotion of anger righteously ordered to justice, while wrath signifies the inordinate desire for vengeance. In this way, Aquinas also sets out a vice of deficiency – an inordinate lack of anger – which, he argues, is equally destructive: it leads to negligence and invites men, whether virtuous or not, to evil by creating a context in which no retribution is carried out.[44]

[40] Aquinas absorbs, in this way, the four species of pride delineated by Gregory (Ibid., q. 8, a. 4, resp.).
[41] Ibid., q. 9, a. 3, ad 1.
[42] Indeed, as Aquinas clarifies in the *Summa*, the desire to put down another is a potential, but not necessary, consequence of pride, the excessive desire to excel (see *STh.*, IIa–IIae, q. 162, aa. 1–3).
[43] Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 12, a. 1, resp. [44] Ibid., q. 12, a. 5, ad 3.

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Thus, in *De malo*, Aquinas frames his discussion of each of the capital sins in terms of a positive moral psychology: the vices reflect disorder in the proper functioning of man's natural faculties and are related to good objects which may be desired or avoided. Aquinas also demonstrates that the four vices of desire – pride, avarice, gluttony, and lust – undermine with a false substitute the three conditions of happiness: that which makes us truly happy must be a 'complete good', it must be 'intrinsically sufficient', and it must be 'accompanied by pleasure'. Excellence, the goal of pride, appears so desirable because a good is complete insofar as it has an excellence. Riches, the goal of avarice, especially promise sufficiency of temporal goods. Food and sexual intercourse, the goals of gluttony and lust, give the greatest sensual pleasure. In this way, the four vices of desire present objects which apparently share the conditions of happiness, and their appearance draws man, who naturally seeks his happiness, to them. In a parallel way, the vices of avoidance – sloth, envy, and anger – are characterised by displacement of the true good because of a disordered desire for some lesser good: thus, with sloth, physical tranquillity is preferred to the true peace of the soul in God; with envy, one's own excellence is preferred to the truthful acknowledgement of others' gifts and works; and with anger, vengeance is preferred to the execution of justice.

Aquinas also offers a deft solution to the problem, posed emphatically in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, of the apparent dual priority of pride and avarice as chief sins. While showing how pride and avarice – in both their general and their specific senses – may be understood as the root of the other vices, he nonetheless reaffirms the priority of pride which Gregory established by integrating the authority of Augustine: he opposes pride, as the 'root and queen of all sins', with charity, as the queen of the virtues.[45] Aquinas thereby re-incorporates the Augustinian framework of the two cities but mitigates Peraldus's problematic approach with its binary opposition between love of an evil and disordered love of a good.

There are major differences, therefore, between Aquinas's treatment of the vices in *De malo* and Peraldus's treatment in *De vitiis*. There is, however, little difference in substance between Aquinas's account of the vices in *De malo* and his account in the *Summa*.[46] Although Aquinas treats the vices in traditional causal order in *De malo* (with a chapter devoted to

[45] Ibid., q. 8, a. 2, resp.

[46] It is misleading to suggest, therefore, that the Aquinas of the *Summa* is not 'too interested in the by then "classical" scheme' of the seven vices: in the *Summa*, 'the scheme of the vices is blown to pieces and its individual members float in isolation throughout the treatise' (see Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins', p. 14). Furthermore, this interpretation of a significant change in Aquinas's treatment

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each in turn), Aquinas's rationale does not. That is, in discussing the moral framework of the vices, Aquinas considers first pride, gluttony, lust, and avarice (as vices of desire), and then sloth, envy, and anger (as vices of avoidance).[47] Equally in *De malo* as in the *Summa*, Aquinas adopts principles based upon human psychology and moral teleology, having already moved away from the organising principle of concatenation. Moreover, Aquinas not only explicitly affirms that it is correct to speak of seven capital vices in the *Summa*, but also provides a precise summary of the same rationale to be found in his treatise *De malo*.[48] The only very slight difference is that, in the second category of avoidance, Aquinas's subdividing principle in the *Summa* is no longer (as in *De malo*) between avoidance of a good (sloth and envy) and resistance to an evil (anger); rather, it is between avoidance of our absolute good (sloth) and avoidance of the good of another (envy and anger).[49] Thus, in *De malo*, Aquinas distinguishes sloth and envy with respect to the *object* avoided (avoidance of the chief good or of the good in another); in contrast, in the *Summa*, he distinguishes envy and anger with respect to the *mode* of avoidance (sadness or resistance respectively).[50] Aside from this one minor nuance, the rationale for the vices in the *Summa* is entirely consistent with that given in *De malo*.

In both *De malo* and the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas affirms the positive mode of desire and avoidance which underlies a capital vice or its offspring. What is strikingly different, of course, is that in the *Secunda secundae*, the vices are incorporated into an ambitious and original synthesis as deviations from the true path of the virtues. Aquinas's first reason for structuring the *Secunda secundae* in terms of the three theological and four cardinal virtues concerns concision and efficiency: the path of enquiry will

is problematic not least because these works seem to have been written (if not actually disputed) at roughly the same time. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work*, trans. by Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 143–48, 201–7; 'The *Secunda Pars* was put together in Paris: the *Prima Secundae* in 1271, followed by the *Secunda Secundae* (1271–72)' (p. 333); 'Given that Thomas's works in Paris were very quickly and widely circulated, we may guess that the Questions *De malo* would have been disputed in Paris during the two academic years 1269–71' (p. 336). For a more detailed discussion of this point, see George Corbett, 'Peraldus and Aquinas: Two Dominican Approaches to the Seven Capital Vices in the Christian Moral Life', *The Thomist* 79 (2015), 383–406 (pp. 400–6).

[47] See Eileen C. Sweeney, 'Aquinas on the Seven Deadly Sins: Tradition and Innovation', in Newhauser and Ridyard (eds.), *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, pp. 85–106 (p. 88).

[48] *STh.*, Ia–IIae, q. 84, a. 4, resp.

[49] This subdivision (grouping envy and anger) arguably makes his rationale more similar to that of Peraldus, who distinguishes these two vices in relation to the origin of this hatred: in another (anger) or in the self (envy).

[50] *STh.*, Ia–IIae q. 84, a. 4, resp.

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be more compendious and expeditious ('compendiosior et expeditior') if the virtues, the opposing vices, the commandments, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are treated together.[51] Aquinas's second reason is in keeping with the implications of his new rationale in *De malo*. In Aquinas's schema, the vices are diversified in species with respect to their matter or object ('secundum materiam vel obiectum'). As vices therefore operate in a disordered way with respect to the same objects as virtues, all moral matters may be traced back to them. Both of these reasons represent a major reform and innovation with regard to Peraldus's approach. Peraldus's rationale impels him to treat the vices and virtues separately: he structures *De vitiis* according to disordered love through excess or deficiency (gluttony, lust, avarice, and sloth) and to the love of an evil (pride, envy, and anger); he structures *De virtutibus* according to the theological and cardinal virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the beatitudes. By relating vices to the virtues in terms of their shared objects, Aquinas is able to treat vices and virtues together within the virtues scheme, thereby avoiding unnecessary repetition. Even Aquinas's further decision to treat primarily those moral matters relevant to all states of men (*STh.*, IIa–IIae, qq. 1–170), and only secondarily those relevant to particular states (qq. 171–89), reflects another clear reform of Peraldus's procedure.

Peraldus's *De vitiis et virtutibus* and Dante's Purgatory and Paradise

It is clear from this comparative analysis that Aquinas and Peraldus took very different approaches to the seven capital vices. Aquinas reforms the moral system of the seven capital vices from within: he provides an Aristotelian anthropology and develops a new positive teleological framework in which to set the vices. Moreover, in the *Summa*, he reorganises the vices as deviations from the true path of the virtues. Peraldus, by contrast, presents a two-stage journey: a journey from vice (with specific mirror

[51] Ibid., IIa–IIae, pr. This seems to be the implication of the comparatives 'compendiosior' (used only five times in Aquinas's corpus) and 'expeditior' (used only four times). Where 'expeditior' is paired with 'compendiosior' in the prologue to the *Secunda secundae*, in *Contra retrahentes* (cap. 15 co.), it is paired with 'levior', and in *Expositio Posteriorum Analyticorum* (lib. 1, l. 35, n. 2), with 'brevior'. In his commentary on the *Sentences*, Aquinas stipulates that the more compendious way is preferable only when it leads to a desired end as well if not better than any other way: 'non semper via compendiosior est magis eligenda, sed solum quando est magis vel aequaliter accommoda ad finem consequendum' (*Super Sent.*, lib. 4, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, ad 4).

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virtues), followed by a journey to heaven (through the theological and cardinal virtues). In other words, where Peraldus's rationale impels him to treat the vices separately, according to disordered love by excess or deficiency (gluttony, lust, avarice, and sloth) or to love of an evil (pride, envy, and anger), Aquinas's Aristotelian anthropology enables him to treat vices and virtues together in terms of their shared good objects, either to be desired or avoided.

In structuring his own Christian ethics, therefore, Dante is following the older, more conservative tradition represented by Peraldus rather than the innovative reforms of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, IIa–IIae, which would supersede Peraldus's *Summa* as *the* moral handbook for Dominican moral theology only in the course of the fourteenth century. The seven vices (with their corresponding remedial virtues, gifts of the Holy Spirit, and beatitudes) structure Peraldus's *De vitiis* and the seven terraces of Dante's Purgatory; the four cardinal virtues and the three theological virtues structure Peraldus's *De virtutibus* and Dante's Paradise. As the next three chapters demonstrate, Dante follows Peraldus not only in terms of his moral rationale for Purgatory, but also in his treatment of the seven vices and their individual subsidiary vices (henceforward 'sub-vices').

Moreover, the parallel organisation of ethical content is matched by a parallel in terms of form. The early-fourteenth-century Santa Maria Novella manuscript of William Peraldus's *De vitiis et virtutibus* contains three beautifully illustrated initials depicting one or more Dominicans.[52] The first shows a Dominican passing on the treatise to another, which may reflect the treatise's primary purpose as a key resource for pastoral ethics.[53] The second (opening the treatise on the vices) shows a Dominican preaching against vice – his right index finger is raised in didactic pose, his eyes look down in stern admonition, and a red book is closed in his left hand; this may reflect the treatise's oral diffusion to laymen as an instruction in morals and a call to penance.[54] The third (opening the treatise on the virtues) shows a haloed Dominican unshadowed by the Sun – with an open book in his right hand, his left beckons his audience to follow the virtuous path to heaven.[55] These three illuminations may illustrate the scope of Peraldus's *De vitiis et virtutibus* as a whole: the treatise on the vices maps out man's journey away from the

[52] Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Soppr. G.4.856. (Santa Maria Novella manuscript), 1ra–359va. I came across these beautiful illustrations while doing an inventory of the Florentine manuscripts for the forthcoming critical edition of Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis*, ed. by Richard Newhauser and Siegfried Wenzel.

[53] BNC, *Conv. Soppr.* G.4.856, 1ra. [54] Ibid., G.4.856, 8ra. [55] Ibid., G.4.856, 155ra.

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perversion of sin; the treatise on the virtues, his path to his heavenly home. It is for this reason that, in another fourteenth-century manuscript, a later scribe has written (on the inside cover) that the treatise is, simply, a *summa theologiae*.[56]

The contrasting postures of the Dominican preacher towards his audience in *De vitiis* (the stern preacher against vice) and *De virtutibus* (the haloed Dominican welcoming his audience into the virtuous path to heaven) highlight an under-explored aspect about the relationship between the poet, Dante, and his intended audience in Purgatory and Paradise. Domenico di Michelino's *Dante e la Divina Commedia* (1465) depicts Dante in exactly the same pose as the saint in the third illustration (Peraldus's treatise on the virtues).[57] This posture might seem appropriate for Dante's *Paradiso* but, for the *Purgatorio*, we might better imagine Dante assuming the role of the vernacular preacher against vice.[58] The corollary, of course, is that the reader of Dante's *Purgatorio* is envisaged in the posture of a Christian sinner.[59] There are obviously many other ways

[56] Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, *Conv. Soppr.* E.1.1047, 1ra–282rb. *Conv. Soppr.* E.1.1047, 1ra–123rb. It is not implausible that Dante may have seen this very manuscript of Peraldus's *Summa*. Although lay people were forbidden, as a rule, from consulting the mendicants' book collections, there is no reason why Dante, given his contacts amongst the Dominican friars at Santa Maria Novella, might not have been given privileged access. Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', p. 532: Dante may 'have seen the *Summa* during his contacts with Dominican friars at Santa Maria Novella in Florence.'

[57] See Domenico di Michelino, 'La Divina Commedia di Dante', tempora on panel. Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore. Photographs of the image are easily viewable online; for example, see <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Firenze.Duomo.Dante.JPG>.

[58] As Carlo Delcorno has convincingly shown, Dante's poem is saturated with not only the content but also the rhetorical gestures of late-thirteenth-century preaching and, in turn, was immediately mined by fourteenth-century preachers for homiletical material. See Carlo Delcorno, 'Dante e il linguaggio dei predicatori', in Carlo Delcorno, *Letture Classensi*, 25 (1996), 51–74; and Carlo Delcorno, *Exemplum*, pp. 195–227. A recent study that explores the relationship between preaching and a small section of *Purgatorio* is Nicolò Maldina, '"L'oratio super pater noster": di Dante: Tra esegesi e vocazione liturgica. Per *Purgatorio* XI, 1–24', *L'Alighieri* 40 (2012), 89–108. See also Nicolò Maldina, *In pro del mondo*.

[59] I am reading Dante's Purgatory as contributing to a much broader context of preaching and confessional literature in the vernacular which, in part, sought to respond to the Church's emphasis on confession highlighted by the decree *Omnis utriusque sexus* of the Fourth Lateran Council. See, for example, Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology,' in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp. 30–43; Roberto Rusconi, 'Ordinate confiteri: la confessione dei peccatori nelle *summae de casibus* e nei manuali per i confessori (metà XII–inizi XIV secolo)', in *L'Aveu: antiquité et moyen âge. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École française de Rome avec le concours du CNRS et de l'Université de Trieste, Rome 28–30 mars 1984* (Rome: l'École française de Rome, 1986), pp. 297–313. For a useful recent survey, see *La Penitenza tra Gregorio VII e Bonifacio VIII: Teologia, Pastorale, Istituzioni*, ed. by Roberto Rusconi, Alessandro Saraco and Manlio Sodi (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticano, 2013).

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in which Dante's second canticle can be, and has been, read (and, as we have already noted, some of these approaches have deliberately evaded the theological dimension *tout court*). Even so, it is historically compelling to explore how the perspective of preacher-poet and sinner-reader, invited by the parallels with Peraldus, might affect our reading of *Purgatorio*. With this approach to the ethical content and form of Dante's Purgatory in mind, we now turn to the first terrace of Purgatory, the terrace of pride.

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PART III

Penance and Dante's Purgatory

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CHAPTER 5

The Terrace of Pride, and the Poet As Preacher

As we argued in Chapter 4, Dante does not just adopt ethical content from Peraldus's *De vitiis* for his poetic treatment of Purgatory, but also appears to assume the role of vernacular preacher against vice. Approaching the first terrace of Purgatory with this context in mind, then, our leading question becomes: How does Dante-poet, as preacher, seek to convert his reader, a sinner, from pride to humility? The terrace of pride is particularly interesting in this regard, because the medieval Church arguably provides its implicit backdrop. This should not surprise us. Although medieval preaching did not occur exclusively within ecclesial walls, much of it did. Preachers used the church setting, liturgy, and the congregation of sinners – and not just the church's architecture, wall paintings, and sculpture – to frame, support, and structure their sermons.

In the terrace of pride, Dante makes repeated references to church architecture and art. This is the terrace of 'visibile parlare' [visible speech], a familiar trope in theological discussions about the power of religious art to effect moral conversion of the heart.[1] One thirteenth-century treatise emphasises that 'pictures and ornaments in churches are the lessons and the scriptures of the laity . . . paintings appear to move the mind more than [verbal] descriptions; for deeds are placed before the eyes [of the faithful] in paintings, and so they appear to be actually happening'; another affirms that religious images 'excite feelings of devotion, these being aroused more

[1] For example, Bede affirms, in *De Templo* (CCSL 119A, 212–13), that the etymology of 'pictura' in Greek is living writing: 'Nam et pictura Graece id est viva scriptura' [cited in Paul Meyvaert, 'Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow', *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1979), 63–77 (p. 69)]. As early as Gregory of Nyssa, moreover, the silent picture ('pictura tacens in pariete') is seen not just to speak but to actively transform the viewer: 'solet enim etiam pictura tacens in pariete loqui, maximeque prodesse'. See Lawrence Duggan, 'Was Art Really the Book of the Illiterate?', *Word and Image* 5 (1989), 227–61 (n. 7, pp. 229–30).

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effectively by things seen than by things heard'.[2] We know that Franciscan and Dominican preachers drew upon the 'emotional intensity of religious paintings' and even 'used a repertoire of gestures known to their audience from paintings'.[3] Dante exploits this visual evangelism to the full, explicitly highlighting the empathetic effects of visual art on the viewer: 'la qual fa del non ver vera rancura / nascere 'n chi la vede' [so that what is not real causes real discomfort to be born in whoever sees it] (*Purg*. x, 133–34).

Dante not only stresses the power of ecclesial art in the terrace of pride, but also gives the terrace an architectonic substructure. The poet first opens the door of Purgatory (like the door of a church) to his reader (*Purg*. ix, 73–138). He then challenges his reader to imagine three carvings of humility on the cliff walls, carvings which evoke the sculptured reliefs of medieval churches (*Purg*. x, 28–96). The group of penitents are compared to corbels holding up a church roof (130–39), and the group's posture is related to church rites of public penance.[4] Within this liturgical space, the souls (and the reader with them) recite the *Pater noster* (*Purg*. xi, 1–24), thereby praying for others (whether in this life or in Purgatory). In the governing analogy, the three souls whom Dante-character encounters are like the church's congregation: they are *exempla* taken straight from life and immediate history (58–142).[5] The examples of pride, moreover, are compared to sculptured tombstones in a church (*Purg*. xii, 16–24).

Much as a medieval preacher would encourage the congregation to meditate on their own lives in relation to the lives of the saints, to fellow Christians on Earth and in Purgatory, and to the damned in Hell, so Dante encourages his readers to meditate upon their own lives in relation to the reliefs of humility, to the three penitent souls (near contemporaries of Dante) marked by pride, and to the damned or demonic *exempla* of

[2] Durandus of Mende, *Rationale divinorum officiorum* (c. 1286); Giovanni da Genoa, *Catholicon* (c. 1290); both cited in John F. Moffitt, *Painterly Perspective and Piety: Religious Uses of the Vanishing Point, from the 15th to the 18th Century* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), p. 53.

[3] Richard A. Jensen, *Envisioning the Word: The Use of Visual Images in Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), p. 27.

[4] The Romano-Germanic Pontifical *ordo* underlines that penitents must slowly process into the church repeatedly genuflecting, bending over, and praying. It explicitly states that such actions and gestures are intended to 'excite the movement toward repentance', and that the priest should further incite penitents to the sorrow, groans, and tears born of true repentance by reading apt passages of Scripture. See *RGP 99.226*, p. 60 (cited in Karen Wagner, '"Cum aliquis venerit ad sacerdotem": Penitential Experience in the Central Middle Ages', in *A New History of Penance*, ed. by Abigail Firey [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008], pp. 201–18 [p. 213]).

[5] Delcorno cites Servasanto da Faenza: 'Sed quid per antiqua discurrimus . . . non longe querantur exempla, quia cottidie sunt oculis patentia, et maxime in hac misera Italia' (Delcorno, *Exemplum*, p. 197).

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pride on the terrace floor. This parallel is further strengthened by two particular characteristics of the terrace of pride. First, it is the only terrace of Purgatory in which the pagan example of virtue turns out to be a saint (we meet Trajan again in heaven). Second, Dante – as we shall see – deliberately excludes saved souls (such as Adam) from his examples of pride, all of whom are damned. In this way, Dante's vision of the terrace of pride models an exercise in spiritual conversion. This, again, should not surprise us, as medieval preachers commonly spurred people to penance through visions of Purgatorial suffering.[6]

The terrace of pride is framed by three examples of humility (*Purg.* X, 34–93) and twelve (or thirteen) examples of pride (*Purg.* XII, 25–63); its centrepiece is Dante-character's encounter with three prideful souls (*Purg.* XI, 37–142). These three groups fall into three different cantos, and scholars have typically addressed them on their own.[7] With each group, questions have arisen about Dante's choice of *exempla*, and scholars have been particularly puzzled by Dante's list, and ordering, of the *exempla* of pride (which has become recognised as a *crux* of its own). In this chapter, I read these three groups together as a triptych, and propose that Dante's choice of *exempla* becomes understandable when we interpret them in relation to Dante's moral purpose for the terrace as a whole. I argue that Dante invites his reader to reflect upon the three prideful souls identified (Omberto, Oderisi, and Salvani) and upon the three groups of

[6] As Mark Chinca argues, the doctrine of Purgatory foregrounds the 'inner eschatological horizon of death and the Particular Judgment'; this 'focus on the time immediately after death could only reinforce the program of practical moral education'. I am grateful to Mark Chinca for showing me the chapter 'Out of This World' of a forthcoming book, provisionally entitled *Remember Your Last End: Meditating on Death and the Afterlife in Western Christianity, from Bonaventure to Luther*, prior to publication. For the doctrine of the Particular Judgement, see 'Judgement', *DTC* 8: 1721–1832. For a more general study of the *ars moriendi*, see Mary Catharine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

[7] This tendency to treat the three groups separately is encouraged by the *lectura Dantis* format. Nonetheless, some studies provide interpretations of the terrace of pride as a whole. See, for example, Giuseppe Mazzotta, 'Theology of History and the Perspective of Art (*Purgatorio* X–XII)', in *Image Makers and Image Breakers*, ed. by Jennifer A. Harris (Ottawa/New York: Legas, 2003), pp. 71–82; Michelangelo Picone, 'Dante nel girone dei superbi (*Purg.* X–XII)', *L'Alighieri*, 46 (2005), 97–110; and Giuseppe Polimeni, 'Canti X–XI–XII. La "gloria della lingua": considerazioni di poetica nello snodo di "Purgatorio" X, XI, XII', in *Esperimenti danteschi: Purgatorio 2009*, ed. by Benedetta Quadrio (Genoa: Marietti, 2010), pp. 105–33. There are both benefits and disadvantages to undertaking a reading of a section of the poem rather than of a single canto or, indeed, of a particular passage. For an example of the hermeneutic benefits of reading a sequence of cantos together, see Zygmunt G. Barański, 'Guido Cavalcanti tra le "cruces" di *Inferno* IX–XI, ovvero Dante e la storia della ragione', in *Versi controversi*, *Letture dantesche*, ed. by Domenico Cofano and Sebastiano Valerio (Foggia: Edizione del Rosone, 2008), pp. 39–112. In defocusing the lens to encompass three cantos, we may perceive more clearly Dante's broader narrative strategy; however, as in the Barański reading cited, this perspective may also lead to new interpretative solutions to particular textual *cruces*.

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prideful examples (delineated by the acrostic 'VOM') in counter-position to the three *exempla* of humility (Mary, King David, and Trajan). By relating these three parts of the terrace and by drawing on a range of theological contexts, I show how Dante models a spiritual exercise of conversion from pride to humility.

In the first part of this chapter, I argue that the theology of the Incarnation underscores Dante's depiction of the three examples of humility (Mary, King David, and Trajan), and I show how Dante invites his reader into an empathetic engagement with them such that he may become, like Mary, a *portatrix Christi* [a Christ-bearer]. In the second part, I suggest that Dante sets up deliberate contrasts, and parallels, between Mary and Omberto; King David and Oderisi; and Trajan and Salvani.[8] In the third part, I argue that the three *exempla* of humility also provide counterfoils to the three groups of four prideful *exempla* and, indeed, that this organisational principle provides some possible interpretative solutions to Dante's ordering of these *exempla*.

The Incarnation: Carving Humility into the Human Heart

Drawing upon familiar tropes in preaching and pastoral practice, Dante presents humility as the necessary gateway to the Christian moral life and to Purgatory proper. Describing the mountain of pride ('mons superbiae'), Peraldus cites Jesus's words to a humble man: 'Behold, I have left an open door before you, which no one can close, because you have a little virtue.'[9] Peraldus interprets man's little virtue ('modica virtus') as humility ('idest humilitatem'), and proceeds to imagine what Jesus might have said to a proud man: 'By contrast, he could say to a proud man: "Behold, I have left a closed door before you, which no one can open, because you have the greatest vice", that is pride.'[10] The Scriptural door of new life – which is closed to the proud but opened to those who humbly submit to Christ – is

[8] In an earlier version of this argument, I also explored how a 'parallel reading' may inflect our appreciation of the literal purgation of the souls on the terrace. See George Corbett, 'Parallel *Exempla*: A Theological Reading of the Terrace of Pride (*Purgatorio* x–xii)', *Le Tre Corone: Revista internazionale di studi su Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio* (2017), 73–96 (pp. 94–95).

[9] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 2 ch. 8, p. 227b: 'dicit Dominus humili: "Ecce dedi coram te ostium apertum, quod nemo poterit claudere, quia modicam habes virtutem", id est humilitatem.' See also Rev. 3:8: 'Scio opera tua – ecce dedi coram te ostium apertum, quod nemo potest claudere – quia modicam habes virtutem, et servasti verbum meum et non negasti nomen meum.'

[10] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 2 ch. 8, pp. 227b–228a: 'Sic e contrario dicere potest superbo: Ecce dedi coram te ostium clausum, quod nemo potest aperire: quia maximum habes vitium, scilicet superbiam.'

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embodied symbolically by the literal door of a medieval church and, I would suggest, by the entrance to Dante's Purgatory. In medieval rituals of public penance, the church door could be literally closed to penitents: after a period of penance, they were forced to prostrate themselves before the church door as the bishop prayed over them and, only then, were given absolution and allowed to enter.[11] In Dante's Purgatory, the door first appears as just a crack (*Purg.* IX, 74: 'un fesso'), and Dante-character must ask humbly for it to be unlocked ('Chiedi / umilemente che 'l serrame scioglia'; 107–8).[12] Where St Peter's representative should err in opening rather than closing, a physical gesture of humility is underlined as the criterion *sine qua non*: 'pur che la gente a' piedi mi s'atterri' (129).[13] In a thinly veiled allegory, Dante-character – like a penitent entering a church in rituals of penance – undergoes the sacrament of penance and, on absolution, enters through the door of Purgatory to begin his satisfaction for his sins (the ritually marked seven *peccata*).[14]

Ascending to the terrace of pride itself, Dante-character immediately sees examples of humility carved onto the marble inner-bank of the cliff which, as Pietro Alighieri's gloss suggests, bring to mind the reliefs on church walls. Dante is inviting the reader, in this way, to engage in a spiritual practice. The reader must bring to mind or memory (as to a wall) an image of humility. By prayerfully meditating upon the example of humility, it may become an antidote or remedy to the wound

[11] See Wagner, pp. 201–18. In public penance, the 'penitents, clothed in distinctive garments, were met at the door of the church, where they lay prostrate while the bishop prayed over them. The Penitents then disappear from the liturgical documents until Holy Thursday, when they once again prostrated themselves before the church doors as the bishop prayed over them; they were given absolution and were admonished not to return to their sinful ways' (pp. 205–6).

[12] There is a strong allusion to Matthew 18:3: 'Nisi conversi fueritis et efficiamini parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum.'

[13] The second implication of perseverance is equally important. Purgatory's gatekeeper opens the Christian path of penance with a clear warning: 'Intrate; ma facciovi accorti / che di fuor torna chi 'n dietro si guata' [Enter; but I warn you that whoever looks back must return outside] (*Purg.* IX, 131–32). Dante-character's subsequent lack of excuse only serves to highlight his temptation to turn back on entering: 'e s'io avesse li occhi vòlti ad essa, / qual fora stata al fallo degna scusa?' [and if I had turned back my eyes to it, what would have been a worthy excuse for the fault?] (*Purg.* X, 5–6). Leaving the world of the dead, Orpheus lost his wife Eurydice forever by looking back. Leaving the world of spiritual death (sin), the sinner will lose his soul forever by turning back to sin, as the further Scriptural allusion to Jesus's harsh words to a potential disciple highlight: 'Nemo mittens manum suam in aratrum et aspiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei' (Luke 9:62).

[14] This entry rite (*Purg.* IX, 76–132) is complex, but all of the early commentators interpret it, albeit with different theological nuances, in terms of a penitential ritual. More recently, this interpretation has been challenged – most notably by Armour, *The Door of Purgatory*; however, as I argued in Chapter 3, Armour's reinterpretation of the meaning of Purgatory's door, as of the Griffin, forms part of a mistaken reading of Dante's Purgatory as a whole in terms of man's secular this-worldly happiness.

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of pride.[15] Before turning to the moral and spiritual content of these *exempla* of humility, we should note that the very divine art itself is meant to inculcate in the souls of the terrace of pride, and imaginatively in Dante's reader, a disposition of humility.

Both the three carvings of humility (*Purg.* x, 34–69) and the twelve carvings of pride (*Purg.* xii, 25–63) are framed by references to the disparity between the works of man, nature, and God: not only the greatest sculptor of antiquity, Polyclitus, but even Nature would be put to scorn (*Purg.* x, 32–33); no human artist could match these shadings and outlines which would cause even the most subtle mind to wonder (*Purg.* xii, 64–66); the dead seem truly dead, the living truly living (67).[16] At one level, Dante is alluding to the remarkable realism achieved by his contemporaries – the pulpits of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, the frescoes of Cimabue and Giotto, and the illustrated miniatures of Oderisi or Franco Bolognese.[17] Like the poetry of Dante itself, the works of these artists may still provoke a sense of awe and attendant humility before human greatness.[18] At a deeper level, Dante is emphasising that even the most sublime, novel, and wondrous of human accomplishments is effortlessly surpassed by He for whom nothing is new ('colui che mai non vide cosa nova'; *Purg.* x, 94). Thus earthly pride is shown to be foolish not

[15] Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* x, 28–33: 'Nam volendo nos, ut dixi, bene a superioribus purgare, debemus in mente nostra recurrere ad parietem, idest ad memoriam operum humilitatis tamquam ad remedium.' Medieval viewers were 'practised in spiritual exercises that demanded a high level of visualization of, at least, the central episodes of the lives of Christ and Mary. To adapt a theological distinction, the painter's were exterior visualizations, the public's interior visualizations.' See Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 45–56 (p. 45).

[16] Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* x, 28–33: 'Dicendo hic figura attenta quod vidit ibi in dicto pariete marmoreo, hoc est sibi ad memoriam reduxit sculpta proprius quam natura posset, nedum ille subtillissimus sculptor Policretus, de quo Tullius in secundo Rethoricae.'

[17] With regard to 'visibile parlare', John Scott refers convincingly to Giovanni Pisano's extraordinary pulpit in the church of S. Andrea, Pistoia (with sculptures created between 1298 and 1301). See John A. Scott, 'Canto xii', in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis: Purgatorio*, ed. Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), pp. 173–97 (pp. 190–91): 'Nella figura di Gabriele, scolpita da Giovanni Pisano, direi che sia possibile scoprire un *visibile parlare*; inoltre, possiamo immaginare che nel vedere nel 1301 per la prima volta questa scena, un fedele abituato alle figure statiche di tanta arte bizantina e romanica, abbia esclamato: "Giurato si saria ch'el dicesse 'Ave!'".'

[18] Barolini suggests that the consequence of Dante's exaltation of divine art is precisely to exalt the achievements of human art (including his own). See Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets, Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 274: 'although Dante is here dedicated to showing that God's art is greater than that of any other artist, the result is an enhancement of his own art, which dares to imitate the divine mimesis. The exaltation of divine art at the expense of human art paradoxically leads to the exaltation of that human artist who most closely imitates divine art, who writes a poem to which heaven and earth contribute, and who by way of being only a scribe becomes the greatest of poets.'

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only through comparison to human greatness, but also, and primarily, through comparison to the power and majesty of God.[19] The works of Creation and of Divine artifice on mount Purgatory should cause man to wonder at the greatness of the Creator: this sense of marvelling, in turn, should lead to a disposition of chosen subjection to God rather than, as is the case with pride, the created being rebelling against the Creator (*Inf.* XXXIV, 35). It is in this sense that Dante, with Baudelarian sarcasm, challenges his readers to bloat themselves with pride after seeing the power and artistry of God: 'Or superbite, e via col viso altero, / figliuoli d'Eva' (*Purg.* XII, 70–71).

This framing focus on the supreme artistry of God adds the key theological dimension to the examples of humility. Thus, the Annunciation (the first example) is the site of not only Mary's humility but also God's paradigmatic humility.[20] As Beatrice explains to Dante-character in Paradise, man could not descend with humble obedience so low as, disobeying, he had sought to rise upwards: 'per non poter ir giuso / con umiltate obedïendo poi / quanto disobediendo intese ir suso' (*Par.* VII, 98–100). Therefore, God (the highest rational being) became man (the lowest), humbling himself to take on flesh: 'e tutti li altri modi erano scarsi / a la giustizia, se 'l Figliuol di Dio / non fosse umilïato ad incarnarsi' (118–20). Through the Incarnation, God – the Creator – chose to become a small part of His creation: 'il suo Fattore / non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura' (*Par.* XXXIII, 5–6). In his depiction of the *Annunciation*, indeed, Dante allots as much space to the message of God's humility in redeeming man through the Incarnation (*Purg.* X, 34–39) as to Mary's humility in response (40–45).

The humility of Mary, as well as that of King David and Trajan, is therefore set within the context of God's exemplary humility in condescending to become man.[21] The angel informs Mary that she is the highest in the order of grace ('gratia plena'), that the Lord is with her ('Dominus tecum'), and that he will be called the son of the most high ('filius altissimi

[19] This highlights the quiddity of pride in its general sense, which is setting oneself up above God and one's neighbour. As Marco Lombardo's speech puts it, man is freely subject to a greater power and to a greater nature: 'A maggior forza e a miglior natura / liberi soggiacete' (*Purg.* XVI, 79–80).

[20] As Matthew Treherne highlights, God's paradigmatic humility at the Incarnation persists through His continued presence in the Eucharistic host. See Matthew Treherne, 'Ekphrasis and Eucharist: The Poetics of Seeing God's Art in *Purgatorio* X', *The Italianist*, XXVI (2006), 2, 177–96 (pp. 186–87).

[21] See Dante Isella, 'Gli "exempla" del canto X del *Purgatorio*', *Studi Danteschi*, 45 (1968), 145–56: 'i tre episodi di umiltà del *Purgatorio* vengono a celebrare tutti un'umiltà più alta, l'incarnazione di Dio' (p. 152).

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vocabitur'). And yet, Mary responds in utmost humility, as the servant of God ('Ecce ancilla Deï . . . fiat mihi secundum voluntatem tuam').[22] At the height of his regal and spiritual power, King David dances before the Ark of the Covenant.[23] He is the humble psalmist (l'umile salmista'; *Purg*. x, 65) who sets himself in contempt before men – his wife, Micòl, looks down disdainfully and sadly from the grand palace – so as to submit himself to God: he is more than a king in the eyes of faith but less than King in the eyes of men ('e più e men che re era in quel caso'; 66).[24] At the height of Imperial power and pomp, Trajan condescends to do the will of the least of his subjects ('la miserella'; 82).[25] His dual motive for her redemption – justice and compassion ('giustizia vuole, e pietà mi ritene'; 93) – echoes in the political sphere God's motives for man's redemption in the spiritual sphere. Whereas proud men vaunt their excellence, Dante shows that those who were greatest in the order of grace (Mary), of regal and spiritual kingship (David), and of nature (Trajan) humbly put themselves at the service of others and of God.

At this stage in the narrative, we are shown examples of humility without, explicitly, humility's reward: 'the humble shall be exalted'. Gregory the Great, however, had already provided an interpretation of Mary, King David, and Trajan that anticipated the reward for their humility. Dante, in turn, arguably embodies this Gregorian reading in *Paradiso*. In *Moralia*. 27, Gregory admires King David more for his humble dancing than for his military prowess in battle because, in the former, he defeats himself; in the latter, he conquers only his enemies.[26] Having great cause for self-glory and pride, King David resisted, in other

[22] As Peraldus notes, Mary does not glory in her exalted status but is disturbed by it ('Unde Beata Virgo cum dixisset eam angelus gratia plenam, et benedictam in mulieribus, turbata est in eius sermone'; Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, p. 339a).

[23] See Durling and Martinez, *The Divine Comedy*, p. 168: 'King David's transporting of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem sealed the union of the northern and southern tribes under the single monarchy. The founding of the unified kingdom was in Dante's eyes parallel to the founding of Rome.'

[24] See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* I, xiv: 'Quia ergo per superbiam homo lapsus est, humilitatem adhibuit ad sanandum. Serpentis sapientia decepti sumus, Dei stultitia liberamur. Quemadmodum autem illa Sapientia vocabatur, erat autem stultitia contemnentibus Deum, sic ista quae vocatur stultitia, Sapientia est vincentibus diabolum.'

[25] See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg*. x, 91–93: 'Certe maxima humiliatio fuit quod altissimus princeps ita inclinaret imperatoriam maiestatem ad audiendam mulierculam plorantem sub superbis signis in Campo Martio superbo, inter equites superbos.'

[26] See Giovanni Fallani, gloss to *Purg*. x, 66: 'S. Gregorio nel XXVII cap. dei *Morali* affermò di ammirare più Davide per le sue danze che per le sue battaglie: in queste vinse i nemici, in quelle se stesso.' It is, indeed, David's humble joy before the Ark of the Covenant, rather than his military victories, which identifies him again in the heaven of Justice (*Par*. xx, 37–42): 'Colui . . . che l'arca traslatò di villa in villa' (37–39).

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words, this primordial temptation. In the Heaven of Jupiter, Dante seems to have Gregory's gloss in mind: David 'il cantor de lo Spirito Santo / che l'arca traslatò di villa in villa: / ora conosce il merto del suo canto' [the singer of the Holy Spirit who transferred the Ark from city to city: now he knows the merit of his singing] (*Par.* xx, 38–40). In *Purgatorio* x, 73–75, Dante explicitly identifies Gregory's reading of Trajan's act of humility. According to the popular tradition, Gregory was so moved by Trajan that he prayed fervently for his redemption.[27] Gregory reads Trajan's humility as foreshadowing the Incarnation and as reflecting a disposition to Christian faith. As we discover in *Paradiso*, Gregory's prayers of living hope ('di viva spene') led to a miracle: Trajan is brought back to life temporarily and, believing in Christ, he experiences the true love ('vero amor') for Christ, such that he merits entry into Paradise: 'fu degna di venire a questo gioco' [he was worthy to come to this joy] (*Par.* xx, 117).[28] Dante's description of the ascent and apotheosis of Mary is also mediated through Gregory. In popular tradition, Gregory – meditating in procession upon an icon of the Virgin – heard the first three lines of the *Regina coeli* chanted by angels, to which he appended the fourth line.[29] In *Paradiso* xxiii, the ascent and assumption of Mary as the queen of Heaven is seen

[27] Dante could have found the story in the *Golden Legend*, in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, and in vernacular renderings such as the *Fiore e vita di filosafi*, a translation of sections of Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*. For a discussion of these sources, see Michele Barbi, *La leggenda di Traiano nei volgarizzamenti del Breviloquio di virtù di Fra' Giovanni Gallese* (Florence: Nozze Flamini-Fanelli, 1895). Nancy Vickers identifies a scene on Trajan's column as the source for the story of Trajan and the widow, and also interprets Dante's presentation in light of the analogy with the biblical parable of the widow and the wicked judge (Luke 18:1–6). See Nancy Vickers, 'Seeing Is Believing: Gregory, Trajan, and Dante's Art', *Dante Studies* 101 (1983), 67–85. Contextualising Dante's treatment within a much wider survey, Gordon Whatley highlights Dante's sympathy with the humanist conception of the Gregory/Trajan legend epitomised by John of Salisbury's *Policraticus:* 'John of Salisbury celebrates Trajan as the exemplary just ruler who had first learned to rule himself. The ground of his good government was his own virtue as a human being.' See Gordon Whatley, 'The Uses of Hagiography: The Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages', *Viator* 15 (1984), 22–63 (p. 46). The images of the Roman Empire as a riderless horse (*Purg.* vi, 88–102) and of Rome as a widow (*Purg.* vi, 112–15) are fused, for Whatley, in the scene of 'Trajan on horseback, with the imperial eagles and Roman cavalry behind him, yielding to justice and "pieta" and to the importuning of the tearful widow who stands at the bridle' (p. 45). For a reading of this episode as part of a much wider, invaluable reappraisal of Dante's reception of Gregory the Great, see Vittorio Montemaggi, 'Dante and Gregory the Great', in Honess and Treherne (eds.), *Reviewing Dante's Theology*, I, pp. 209–62.

[28] Trajan's salvation through Gregory's intervention had become a commonplace. See, for example, Aquinas, *STh.*, IIIa. Supp., q. 71, a. 5, ob. 5.

[29] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. by William Granger Ryan, with an introduction by Eamon Duffy (Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 173–74: 'We are told that the voices of angels were heard around the image, singing *Regina coeli laetare, alleluia, / Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia, / Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia!* to which Gregory promptly added: *Ora pro nobis, Deum rogamus, alleluia!*' (p. 174).

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as fulfilling the work begun at the Annunciation. As the *portatrix* of Christ ('quia quem meruisti portare'), she merits her exalted status.

Mary's role as *portatrix Christi* also highlights the way in which Dante encourages his reader to meditate empathetically on these examples of humility. In the tradition of the pseudo-Bonventurean fourteenth-century *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, the Christian is invited into a spiritual exercise: inhabiting imaginatively the role of Mary, the reader-viewer may become – like her – a vessel of Christ.[30] As Conrad of Saxony highlights, Mary is the mirror through which Christians see the true image of God in themselves.[31] For Augustine, Mary's Annunciation is a paradigm for each soul who conceives Christ in spirit as the seed of salvation: 'just as the blessed virgin conceived Christ corporeally, so every holy soul conceives him spiritually'.[32] Indeed, Augustine contrasts the stubborn pride of the pagan philosophers with the humility of heart, piety, and fear of God, which are the first steps on the Christian journey to perfection.[33] Mary's Annunciation embodies the humility through which she, in spirit and in flesh, and man, in spirit, may receive Christ and enter the path to salvation and the new life in Christ. By empathetic meditation on Mary's humility, therefore, sinners may become partakers in the fruit of the Incarnation.

[30] Since the eighteenth century, the *Meditationes vitae Christi* has been attributed to the fourteenth-century Franciscan John of Caulibus (see 'Introduction', in John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. and trans. by Francis X. Taney, Anne Miller, and C. Mary Stallings-Taney [Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 2000], pp. xiii–xxx). Sarah McNamer, however, has more recently contested this attribution. McNamer posits that the original was not the Latin version but a much shorter Italian text which, she speculates, may have been written by a Franciscan nun; McNamer attributes the other two-thirds of the text to a 'male redactor' and claims 'affective dissonance' exists between different sections. See Sarah McNamer, 'The Origins of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*', *Speculum* 84 (2009), 905–55, and Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Whatever the exact date or authorship of the original treatise, the Latin and Italian versions give an invaluable insight into the modes of imaginative engagement with Scripture practised by the Franciscan order from the thirteenth century onwards. On the role of the viewer's imagination, see also Jeffrey Hamburger, 'The Visual and the Visionary', *Viator* 20 (1989), 161–82.

[31] In this sense, it is particularly significant that Dante's counter-position of each capital vice with a virtue and an episode in the life of Mary ultimately derives, almost certainly, from Conrad of Saxony (pseudo-Bonaventure), *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis*. See Delcorno, *Exemplum*, p. 199: 'L'idea di contrapporre ad ogni vizio capitale una virtù ed un fatto della vita di Maria deriva certamente dallo *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* di Corrado di Sassonia, un tempo attribuito a S. Bonaventura; ma il gusto di queste corrispondenze, condificato da Ugo di S. Vittore nel *De quinque septenis seu septenariis*, era divulgato dalle *summae* per i confessori.'

[32] *STh.*, IIIa. q.30, a.1, arg. 3: 'sicut beata virgo corporaliter Christum concepit, ita quaelibet sancta anima concipit ipsum spiritualiter, unde apostolus dicit, Galat. IV, filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis'.

[33] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, II, vii, 9–11.

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As Gregory's reading of the glorifications of the three *exempla* of humility – Mary, King David, and Trajan – is embodied through Dante's depictions in *Paradiso*, so the glory of the reader-sinner who takes Mary as his model is also represented in the heavenly rose. Thus, in *Paradiso*, Beatrice directs Dante-character to Mary as the rose in which the divine Logos took flesh, and also to the lilies, the human souls who *through* Mary became spiritual vessels of Christ:

> Perché la faccia mia sì t'innamora
> che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino
> che sotto i raggi di Cristo s'infiora?
> Quivi è la rosa in che 'l Verbo divino
> carne si fece, quivi son li gigli
> al cui odor si prese il buon cammino.
> (*Par.* XXIII, 70–75)

> [Why does my face so enamour you that you do not turn to the lovely garden blooming under the rays of Christ?
> There is the rose in which the divine Word was made flesh; there are the lilies whose perfume won people to the good path.]

Dante's image of human souls flowering in heaven is taken directly from the mosaics of the Florentine baptistry (where Dante had begun his own life of faith in baptism). This autobiographical resonance underscores the power of religious art imprinting itself on the viewer, and is reinforced immediately following this passage as Dante highlights his morning and evening devotion to Mary: 'Il nome del bel fior ch'io sempre invoco / e mane e sera' (88–89).

Three Living Confessions: Reading One's Sin in the Mirror of Virtue

The centrepiece of the terrace of pride is Dante-character's encounter with three prideful souls. In the governing analogy between souls in Purgatory and the penitential community on Earth, these Purgatorial souls might be compared to a church's congregation. As a medieval preacher would encourage his congregation to meditate on their own lives in relation to the lives of the saints, so Dante intends that we should meditate on the three prideful souls in relation to the three *exempla* of humility inscribed on the cliff.

A counter-position between the Virgin Mary (the first example of humility) and Omberto Aldobrandesco (the first soul stamped with pride) might seem, at first sight, strange. However, medieval preachers commonly attacked the folly of taking pride in one's noble lineage by making

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reference to Eve and Mary. For example, Peraldus highlights that God did not make one Adam of silver (from whom all nobles descend), and another Adam of mud (from whom all ignoble people descend); instead, he made one man of mud from whom all descend. Therefore, either everyone is noble because of his blood, or everyone is base.[34] Did not God create each one of us? Therefore our father is God, our mother Eve ('Pater noster Deus est, mater nostra Eva'). How, then, can someone despise his brother?[35] Moreover, Peraldus emphasises that – in the time of grace – God specifically chose persons who were ignoble and contemptible to the world.[36] The second Eve, Mary – although least in the eyes of the world – becomes the mother of God and the queen of Heaven.

In this vein, Dante characterises Omberto's pride in his lineage as a denial, or neglect, of this shared ancestry. In a *captatio benevolentiae* addressed to Omberto, Virgil refers to Dante-character's body as the burden of Adam's flesh ('lo 'ncarco / de la carne d'Adamo onde si veste'; *Purg.* XI, 43–44). Omberto proceeds to define his prideful disdain – 'Ogn'uomo ebbi in despetto' (64) – as a failure to think of Eve, our shared mother: 'non pensando a la comune madre' (63).

A note of contemporary polemic can be detected here. The object of Omberto's arrogance – 'L'antico sangue e l'opere leggiadre / d'i miei maggior' [the ancient blood and noble works of my ancestors] (*Purg.* XI, 61) – bears a close resemblance to Frederick II's definition of nobility – 'antica possession d'avere / Con reggimenti belli' [the ancient possession of wealth with pleasing manners] – a definition Dante had sought to confute in the thirty chapters of *Convivio* IV. Notably, in the relevant *canzone* ('Le dolci rime d'amor') – as in *Purgatorio* XI – Dante draws on Peraldus's argument of common ancestry.[37] However, he recognises in the *Convivio* that this argument depends upon a view – that there was a beginning to the human race – which is held by Christians but not necessarily by

[34] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. VI, pa. 3, c. 28, p. 290b: 'omnes sumus ex eodem patre, et ex eadem matre: non legitur Dominum fecisse unum Adam argenteum, unde essent nobiles, et unum luteum, ex quo essent ignobiles: sed unicum de luto plasmavit, ex quo omnes eximus. Unde si aliquis ex hoc solo nobilis est, quia ex nobili patre, aut nobili matre: aut omnes erimus nobiles, aut omnes ignobiles: quia aut parentes primi fuerunt nobiles, aut ignobiles.'

[35] Ibid.: 'Nunquid non Deus unus creavit nos? Quare ergo despicit fratrem suum unusquisque vestrum?'

[36] Ibid.: 'In tempore enim gratiae potius voluit ignobiles eligere, quam nobiles. 1. Corinth. 1: "Ignobilia et contemptibilia mundi eligit Deus".'

[37] The dependence of Dante's account of nobility in *Convivio* IV on Peraldus's treatise on *Superbia* has been convincingly argued in Maria Corti, 'Le fonti del "Fiore di Virtù" e la teoria della "nobiltà" nel Duecento', in Maria Corti, *Storia della lingua e storia dei testi* (Milan/Naples: Ricciardi, 1989), pp. 45–121 (pp. 104–21).

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philosophers and gentiles ('e dice cristiani, e non filosofi, ovvero gentili, [delli quali] le sentenze anco sono in contro'; *Conv.* IV, xv, 9). Aristotle posited, after all, that the world (and each of the species including man) is eternal. As Omberto intimates, his arrogance – 'non pensando a la comune madre' [forgetting our common mother] (63) – may thereby register an implicit scepticism, or at least indifference, towards Christianity. As Dante underlines in 'Le dolci rime d'amor', Christians simply cannot hold this genealogical view of nobility ('Ma ciò io non consento / Nè eglino altresì, se son Cristiani'; *Conv.* IV, canz. iii, 72–73). Although Dante employs this *auctoritas fidei* in the *canzone*, in *Convivio* IV itself he confutes Frederick's genealogical definition of nobility on purely philosophical grounds. He argues that true nobility consists in the excellence of the soul, and that while a virtuous person may ennoble a family tree, a person cannot derive nobility from his lineage.

It is surely significant, then, that the second prideful soul, Oderisi da Gubbio, conjures up the elevated world of Paris and Bologna (both referenced indirectly) in which honour (a term repeated three times in five lines), glory, and fame were apportioned according to intellectual and artistic excellence.[38] Oderisi refers to the arts of illumination, painting, and poetry and, specifically, to Dante's direct contemporaries (and, most probably, to Dante himself; *Purg.* XI, 99). These are excellences of soul which Dante advocates, celebrates, and exhibits in his writings.[39] In Purgatory, Dante nonetheless registers that, from a Christian perspective, a grave spiritual danger of pride arises from pursuing excellence of soul (true nobility), man's *this-worldly* felicity. As Oderisi confesses, the great desire of excellence ('lo gran disio / de l'eccellenza') impeded him during his life from being courteous to another miniaturist whom he desired to

[38] Giovanni Fallani and Stefano Bottari both argue that the Oderisi–Franco pairing throws into relief two contrasting styles of miniatures epitomised by the respective stylistic traditions in Bologna and Paris. See Giovanni Fallani, 'Ricerca sui protagonisti della miniatura dugentesca; Oderisi da Gubbio e Franco Bolognese', *Studi danteschi* 48 (1971), 137–51: 'Oderisi, nel celebrare così altamente il rivale, fa capire che . . . egli aveva seguito una scuola di tradizione bizantina e si era mantenuto fedele ai canoni della miniatura bolognese, senza le ulteriori ricerche sui modi della cultura francese' (p. 143); Stefano Bottari, 'Per la cultura di Oderisi da Gubbio e di Franco Bolognese', in *Dante e Bologna nei tempi di Dante*, ed. by Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Bologna (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1967), pp. 53–59: 'Dante individua così due modi di essere della miniatura bolognese sul finire del secolo: il primo, per quanto di grande efficacia, legato ancora alla più antica tradizione; l'altro più vario, ricco e felice, più scopertamente improntato agli uomori gotici e più intimamente legato alla cultura francese' (p. 56).

[39] For Dante, excellence of soul is demonstrated especially through excellence in knowledge and language. See, for example, *DVE* II, i, 8: 'Sed optime conceptiones non possunt esse nisi ubi scientia et ingenium est: ergo optima loquela non convenit nisi illis in quibus ingenium et scientia est.'

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surpass: 'di tal superbia qui si paga il fio' [Here we pay the toll for such pride] (88). From the perspective of eternity, Oderisi now recognises his pursuit of honour and glory as entirely vain: 'Oh vana gloria de l'umane posse! / com' poco verde in su la cima dura' [Oh vain glory of human powers! how briefly it stays green at the summit] (91–92).[40] It is folly to prefer vainglory (which lasts for only an instant) to the eternal glory of Heaven, or to seek a transitory thing when we can have eternal beatitude.[41] As Dante's treatment of the virtuous pagans eloquently testifies, excellence of soul has no salvific merit if it is not directed to the glory of God. Thus Oderisi confesses that had he not turned to God, he would be in Hell and not in Purgatory (89–90).

The example of King David, the 'umile psalmista', may provide a mirror through which the distortion of Oderisi's pursuit of artistic excellence may be correctly perceived. It is in virtue of David's humility, and his acknowledgement of his own sinfulness, that he becomes the *vox Dei*. Dante refers to King David, the purported author of the Psalms, as '[il] cantor che per doglia / del fallo disse "*Miserere mei*"' [the singer who, grieving at his sin, said '*Miserere mei*'] (*Par*. XXXII, 11–12). Oderisi's pride in artistic excellence (an excellence of the soul) is reflected, therefore, in the true mirror of Christian virtue by King David, who devotes his art to the service of God. It is also in the context of King David that the tacit allusion to Dante's own poetic supremacy over Guido Guinizelli and Guido Cavalcanti becomes clear[42]:

> Così ha tolto l'uno a l'altro Guido
> la gloria de la lingua; e forse è nato
> chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà del nido.
> (*Purg*. XI, 97–99)

> [Just so, one Guido has taken from the other the glory of the language, and perhaps he is born who will drive both of them from the nest.]

[40] Dante's metaphors for vainglory can also be found in Peraldus. For example, vainglory is compared to a breath of wind at *Purg*. XI, 100–1 ('Non è il mondan romore altro ch'un fiato / di vento') and at Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, p. 337b ('Vocatur etiam vana gloria ventus, ut insinuetur fatuos esse qui eam esuriunt, ventus enim hominem inflando ei nocet, potius quam prosit').

[41] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, p. 335b: 'Secunda fatuitas est, quod vanam gloriam, quae est ad instar puncti, gloriae aeternae praeponit; unde Gregorius; "Stultum est inde transitoria quaerere, unde aeterna possumus habere."'

[42] Durling corroborates the scholarly consensus which implicitly identifies Dante as he 'chi l'una e l'altro caccerà del nido'. See Durling, '"Mio figlio ov'è" (*Inferno*. X, 60)', in *Dante da Firenze all'aldilà*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2000), pp. 303–29. Furthermore, as Durling adds, 'il nome di *Guido* ... evoca sempre l'ombra del Cavalcanti', confirming his conclusion that the three poets are Guinizelli, Cavalcanti (the two Guidos), and Dante himself (n. 44, p. 320).

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In contrast to the intellectual disdain of Guido Cavalcanti ('ebbe a disdegno'; *Inf.* x, 63), Dante's starting point here is not self-regarding vanity, but rather an awareness of his own sin and the need for God's aid. In other words, Dante-character becomes, like King David, a sinner turned singer. Dante-character's first words in the poem – in a strange conflation of vulgate Latin ('*Miserere*') and vernacular Italian ('di me') – fittingly echo the opening of King David's penitential psalm. And Dante further asserts his credentials as a new David, a *scriba Dei*, through his vernacularisation of the Lord's prayer in this terrace.

The third juxtaposition, then, is between the Emperor Trajan and Provenzan Salvani. In contrast to the ideal of universal empire, Salvani had sought to wield complete political power in Siena for his own ends: 'fu presuntüoso / a recar Siena tutta a le sue mani' (*Purg.* xi, 122–23). Whereas Trajan, at the height of his military power, had sought justice and mercy, Salvani, when leading the Imperial faction at Montaperti, sought to raze Florence to the ground. Like Farinata, who saved Florence on that occasion, he embodies the self-serving internecine power struggles of Ghibellines and Guelfs which Dante will castigate – to the full – in *Paradiso* vi, 97–111. But, unlike Farinata, Salvani – late in his life – was moved through love for a friend to put aside his pride:

> 'Quando vivea più glorïoso,' disse
> 'liberamente nel Campo di Siena,
> ogne vergogna diposta, s'affisse;
> e lì, per trar l'amico suo di pena
> ch'e' sostenea ne la prigion di Carlo
> si condusse a tremar per ogne vena.
> (*Purg.* xi, 133–38)

> ['When he was living in greatest glory,' he replied, 'freely, in the Campo at Siena, laying aside all shame, he took his stand;
> and there, to free his friend from the punishment he was suffering in Charles's prison, he brought himself to tremble in every vein.']

Just as Trajan's pity for the widow's plight leads him to fulfil his Imperial mandate of Justice for all, so Salvani – in *imitatio Christi* – sacrifices his pride and station, undergoing the suffering and humiliation of beggary, to pay the ransom for his friend.

Thus, the three souls stamped by pride in Purgatory – Omberto, Oderisi, and Salvani – may be read in light of the *exempla* of humility – Mary, King David, and Trajan. Omberto's pride in his family line (an excellence, essentially, of the body) is contrasted with Eve, the communal mother, and Mary, of humble birth. Oderisi's pride in artistic excellence

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(an excellence of the soul) is compared to King David, the model of the Christian sinner-singer who puts his art at the service of God. Salvani's pride in political power (an external excellence) is contrasted with Trajan, who puts his universal power at the service of the powerless in the cause of justice.[43] Crucially, we encounter Omberto, Oderisi, and Salvani in a state of conversion: towards the ends of their lives, they did turn away from sin, and now – in Purgatory – they are still in a process of spiritual transformation. Most noticeably, perhaps, they begin to recognise the good in each other. Where Omberto and Oderisi confess their pride in their own voice, Oderisi speaks for Salvani. Oderisi's newfound courtesy to Franco of Bologna (*Purg*. XI, 82–87) is thus seconded by his praise of Salvani. As Peraldus emphasises, praising others is a key remedy to vainglory. In nature, after all, the beholder takes delight in what is seen (as sight takes pleasure in a beautiful colour), but not vice versa (the beautiful colour does not taken pleasure in being seen). So, in human relations, a person should take pleasure from the good in others and not from the praise of others.[44]

Pride As Dante's Sin

The confessions of Omberto Aldobrandesco, Oderisi da Gubbio, and Provenzan Salvani in Purgatory are also spiritually productive for Dante-character. He recognises in each of them an aspect of pride or vainglory in himself. In this way, Dante models in his own person a spiritual exercise for his reader. In response to Omberto's speech, Dante-character humbly acknowledges this prideful tendency: 'Ascoltando chinai in giù la faccia' [Listening, I bent down my face] (*Purg*. XI, 73). Dante-character will display not only filial reverence, but a latent pride in family lineage, when he encounters Cacciaguida in Paradise (*Par*. XVI, 1–27). Moreover, it is clear that pride runs in the Alighieri blood: Dante's great-grandfather has already spent more than one hundred years on the terrace of pride (*Par*. XV, 91–93).[45] Dante's pride in his own nobility of soul and excellence in poetry is even more pronounced. Dante-character acknowledges how Oderisi's confession and discourse on vainglory have reduced his

[43] See also Forti, 'Pusillanimi e superbi', pp. 223–24.

[44] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, p. 335a: 'Naturale autem est, quod apprehendens in re apprehensa delectetur, et non e converso: ut visus delectatur in viridi colore, et non color viridis delectatur ex eo quod videtur: sic videtur, quod aliquis non debeat delectari ex eo quod creditur talis vel talis, sed potius illi qui vident eum bonum, debent in eo delectari.'

[45] Dante does insist, nonetheless, that love of ancestors may be a stimulus to virtuous activity (*Par*. XVI, 7–9).

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pride and instilled in its place good humility: 'E io a lui: "Tuo vero dir m'incora / bona umiltà, e gran tumor m'appiani"'[And I to him: 'Your true words instil good humility in my heart, and you reduce a great swelling in me'] (*Purg.* XI, 118–19). Rising to the apex of political power in Florence at the time of his journey through Purgatory (he would hold office as one of the six priors of Florence from 15 June to 15 August 1300), Dante-character learns through Oderisi's prophecy that he will be able to gloss Salvani's humiliation with his own future experience of exile (XI, 139–42).

These three souls – as part of the *ecclesia* of Purgatory – essentially function as living sermons for Dante-character: they lead him to become self-conscious of his own pride and to adopt, in response, the posture of humility. At the close of the dramatic sequence, Dante-character is described as side-by-side with Oderisi, like an oxen under a yoke: 'Di pari, come buoi, che vanno a giogo / m'andava io con quell' anima carca' (*Purg.* XII, 1–2).[46] Even when Virgil commands him to rise up, his mind remains humbled and bowed down in thought (8–9). Dante's acute awareness of his own sinful pride, indeed, spills over into the next terrace of envy:

> 'Li occhi', diss' io, 'mi fieno ancor qui tolti,
> ma picciol tempo, ché poca è l'offesa
> fatta per esser con invidia vòlti.
> Troppa è più la paura ond' è sospesa
> l'anima mia del tormento di sotto,
> che già lo 'ncarco di là giù mi pesa.'
> (*Purg.* XIII, 133–38)

['My eyes,' I said, 'will be taken from me here, but for a short time only, for they have offended little by being turned with envy.

Much greater is the fear that holds my soul in suspense for the torment below, and already the burden down there weighs on me'].

This is the only place in the poem that Dante explicitly identifies his own sins in this way: namely, he has sinned gravely in pride, and only lightly in envy. Indeed, he fears his future punishment for pride (when he returns to Purgatory after his death) so strongly that he can already feel the weight of the boulders. The relative gravity of his pride is also signalled when he ascends, much lighter, from the terrace of pride:

[46] See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 1–3: 'sicut enim taurus superbus ponitur sub jugum ut dometur et fiat humilis et mansuetus, ita quod discit non ferire amplius cornu vel pede; ita nunc Odorisius superbus positus erat sub saxo, ut domaretur et efficeretur humilis et mansuetus, et oblivisceretur non ferire alios lingua: et Dantes qui similiter fuerat superbus ibat par cum illo, ut habilius loqueretur secum, et disceret inclinari et humiliari.' See also John Scott, 'Canto XII', p. 176.

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Già montavam su per li scaglion santi
ed esser mi parea troppo più lieve
che per lo pian non mi parea davanti.
Ond' io: 'Maestro, dì, qual cosa greve
levata s'è da me, che nulla quasi
per me fatica, andando, si riceve?'
(*Purg.* XII, 115–20)

[Already we were mounting the sacred steps, and I seemed to be much lighter than I had been before, on level ground.
So I: 'Master, say, what heavy thing has been lifted from me,
so that while going up I feel almost no exertion?']

This passage further confirms pride as one of Dante's gravest sins. At the same time, it makes a straightforward allusion to the structuring principle of the seven capital vices – namely, that pride is the source sin from which all the others flow. As Francesco da Buti emphasises, when a person in the humble state of penitence overcomes the great weight of pride, he or she may more easily defeat all the other sins.[47] Or, in Velutello's analogy, if one destroys the roots of a tree, all the branches, now dried of sap, are more easily broken.[48]

Pride and Spiritual Death

Like the souls in Purgatory, Dante's reader, in the opening of *Purgatorio* XI, voices the Lord's Prayer in its entirety. Through the acrostic VOM opening *Purgatorio* XII, the reader is also made to turn his eyes downwards – 'Volgi li occhi in giuè' (*Purg.* XII, 13) – as his eye scrolls down the page (rather than from left to right).[49] The final stage of the conversion from pride to humility is, then, this meditation upon the twelve *exempla* of pride, carved on the path under the souls' feet. Dante-author reinforces the overarching architectonic analogy of the episode by comparing these carvings to tombstones in a medieval church. As the first remedy to vainglory is the *meditatio mortis*, so the comparison to tombstones (evoking the infernal graveyard of *Inferno* X) sets into relief the perspective of eternity as a correlative to this-worldly pride. But, through the architectural analogy, Dante also indicates how his reader should engage with these *exempla* of pride. Alluding once more to the realism of late-thirteenth-century sculpture, Dante highlights that the effigies carved on tombstones

[47] Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 118–26.
[48] Alessandro Vellutello, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 115–26.
[49] On the acrostic, see Robert Hollander's survey in Hollander, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 25–63.

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may bear the exact resemblances of the dead persons buried: 'le tombe terragne / portan segnato quel ch'elli eran pria' (*Purg.* XII, 17–18).[50] However, only those who recognise the souls ('per la puntura de la rimembranza'; 20) truly feel renewed sorrow for their deaths. Similarly, the *exempla* of pride may provoke sorrow only in those readers who recognise in the *exempla*'s lives (and spiritual death) a sinful tendency of their own. As Pietro Alighieri comments, the twelve *exempla* display the tragic end of such pride, and so should move men to purge themselves of this vice and adhere to its curative virtue, humility.[51]

Although it would be a forced reading to simply impose the prevailing scheme – of parallel *exempla* – onto these examples of pride, such an interpretation actually evolves naturally from the passage's contextual background. Once again, Peraldus is important here. Of the twelve examples of pride that Dante gives as warnings to sinners, all six Scriptural *exempla* except for Nimrod (who replaces Adam) are found in the first seven examples listed by Peraldus: Lucifer, Adam, Saul, Rehoboam, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Holofernes.[52] Whereas Peraldus's list also includes *exempla* of pride who are nonetheless saved, such as Adam and St Peter, Dante chooses purely negative *exempla* from classical history and mythology: all Dante's *exempla* came to a bad end (they are represented here, but inhabit Hell).[53] The structure of Dante's list of *exempla*

[50] Durling notes that 'tomb sculpture portraying the buried was a relatively recent phenomenon in Italy (since 1272), although common in northern Europe for at least a century and a half' (Durling and Martinez, *The Divine Comedy*, p. 197).

[51] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XII, 1–72: 'quomodo vidit in solo et pavimento huius primi circuli sculptum, ad quem exitum venit superbia nostra ut plurimum in hoc mundo infimum et depressum, ut sub allegorico sensu moveat homines ad removendum se ab ipso vitio et adherere virtuti humilitatis sibi in bono contrarie'.

[52] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 2 ch. 6, pp. 221a–222b. I refer to 'twelve examples' by not including Troy in the list; following Delcorno, I consider the list as '12 + 1' rather than as '13': twelve is the common number in the *artes praedicandi*, while the example of Troy (with its own acrostic condensed into three lines) serves as a paradigmatic, summative example. See Delcorno, *Exemplum*, pp. 207–10. I do not find convincing the attempt to reduce the list including Troy to twelve by counting Briareus and the giants as one example. Two key arguments in favour of this position are that, by so doing, one maintains the order of Christian followed by pagan examples throughout the series, and that there are, in this way, an equal number of Christian and pagan *exempla* (see Forti, 'Superbia e superbi', in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, v., pp. 484–87; and Scott, 'Canto XII', p. 178). Equally valid opposing arguments in terms of consistency and balance suggest that, in reading Briareus and the giants as two *exempla*, a terzina is allotted to each example (consistency); moreover, the figure of Eve (*Purg.* XII, 70–72), the first woman, counterpoises Troy, the primeval city (balance). Delcorno also points out that the list in John of Wales's *Summa virtutum et vitiorum* includes four of Dante's six Scriptural *exempla*: Saul, Rehoboam, Nebuchadnezzar, and Holofernes (Delcorno, 'Dante e Peraldo', n. 66, p. 224).

[53] Delcorno argues that Dante may have drawn many of his pagan *exempla* indirectly from medieval compilations. He gives the example of John of Wales's *Communiloquium* with its abundance of

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has puzzled critics, with many attempts being made to find a symmetry or organising principle.[54] It seems to me that Dante's acrostic – the first four terzine begin with *Vedea*; the second quartet with *O*; the third with *Mostrava* – divides the list of twelve examples naturally into three groups of four.[55] The same acrostic technique in the following terzina (the three lines spell VOM) naturally makes of Troy a separate, paradigmatic example. Delcorno has provided a further contextual rationale based on Dominican preaching manuals for dividing the list of twelve into three groups of four.[56] Those scholars who have accepted this division have attempted to provide a theme, or aspect of pride, which might unify each group of exempla.[57] However, they have not considered whether Dante might have set these three groups of prideful *exempla* in counterpoint with the three *exempla* of humility. Given the acrostic, the preaching context, and these implicit thematic schema, it seems likely that Dante intended these cantos to be read in parallel.

The emblematic contrast between Lucifer, the first example of pride, and Mary, the first example of humility, is reinforced through the figures of Briareus, the giants, and Nimrod. Whereas Lucifer, who raised himself above the Creator (*Inf.* XXXIV, 35), descended from the noblest to the least (*Purg.* XII, 25–26), Mary, who became the humble vessel of the Creator,

auctoritates and *exempla* taken both from theologians ('divini doctores') and from classical literature ('libri gentilium philosophorum'). See Delcorno, *Exemplum*, pp. 203–5 (p. 205). It also seems likely that the pagan *exempla* of pride were mediated through medieval allegorical readings. For Ovid, Delcorno cites the *Allegoriae* of Arnulph of Orleans, of Giovanni del Virgilio, and the *Integumenta Ovidii* of John of Garland (Ibid., p. 214).

[54] See, for example, Nicola Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XII, 61–63.

[55] The three anaphora (vedea, O, mostrava) seem to allude to three senses: sight, hearing, and touch – that is, to seeing, speaking, and showing.

[56] Twelve is the *numerus abundans*, and four allegorically symbolises beastiality and, on this reading, would represent the 'history of sinful humanity' (Delcorno, *Exemplum*, pp. 209–10): 'Vi è un'indubbia analogia tra la distribuzione degli esempi di superbia e gli schemi compositivi in uso nella predicazione del tempo di Dante, descritti con molta precisione nelle *artes praedicandi*: uno dei più comuni tracciava una divisione a tre membri, ognuno dei quali veniva poi dilatato con quatrro distinzioni, così da ottenere un organismo di dodici elementi' (p. 209).

[57] Parodi, for example, argues that these three groups represent presumption (a violence against God), vainglory (a violence against oneself), and ambition (a violence against others). See E. G. Parodi, 'Gli esempi di superbia punita e il "bello stile" di Dante', in E. G. Parodi, *Poesia e storia nella Divina Commedia* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1965), pp. 233–52: 'la prima serie è tutta di violenti contro la divinitá, la seconda sembra piú modestamente di vanagloriosi, che furono la rovina di sé stessi, e la terza di violenti contro il prossimo' (pp. 240–41). See also Scott, 'Canto XII', p. 176: 'Notiamo che le prime quattro terzine iniziano con la parola "Vedea" e contengono esempi di ribellione o violenza contro la divinità; il secondo gruppo (di vanagloriosi, che furono causa della propria rovina) è anche esso composto da quattro terzine inizianti con la particella vocativa "O"; mentre il terzo gruppo (di tirani superbi, bramosi di primeggiare) comprende quattro terzine, ciascuna introdotta dalla parola "Mostrava".'

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ascended from the least to the most noble (*Par.* XXXIII, 4–7).[58] In the works of Virgil, Statius, and Lucan, Briareus – a monstrous giant – presumes to challenge Jove, and Dante presents Jove as a pagan analogue to Lucifer.[59] Heard of but not seen among the giants guarding the pit of Cocytus, 'lo smisurato Brïareo' (*Inf.* XXXI, 98) prefigures the appearance of Lucifer at the Earth's centre (*Inf.* XXXIV, 28–57). By extension, the mythical battle between the Roman gods and the giants depicted in Purgatory may represent analogically the cosmic battle between the good and the bad angels (*Purg.* XII, 31–33). It also prefigures the attempt of King Nimrod to build a tower to heaven. Dante underscores this syncretism by presenting Nimrod, the king of Babylon (Gen. 10. 9–10), as a giant (*Inf.* XXXI, 67–81). The pride of Lucifer and the angels in their cosmic battle with God, and man's prideful attempt to resist the will of God, therefore, find their inverse parallel in the humility and subjection of Mary.[60] The drama of man's mad attempt to become like God – to bridge the infinite gap between creature and Creator – is thus dramatized in the first quartet of examples.[61] The fact that all four examples date from before the coming of Christ highlights, once more, God's humility at the Incarnation: it takes us back to the Annunciation, where Mary's 'AVE' literally reverses, in a playful wordplay, the human pride of Eve ('EVA').[62]

[58] Dante's description of Lucifer's fall ('vedea colui . . . giù dal cielo / folgoreggiando scender') renders the Vulgate: 'Videbam Satanam sicut fulgor de caelo cadentem' (Luke 10:18). In this way, Dante underlines the danger of spiritual or intellectual arrogance. As Peraldus's gloss on this biblical passage highlights, Jesus's words need to be seen in their context as a reprimand to his disciples for rejoicing in their spiritual power: 'in hoc nolite gaudere' (Luke 10:20). See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. vi, pa. 3, pp. 334b–335a: 'Et eiusdem 14. ubi miraculo facto de quinque panibus et duobus piscibus, compulit discipulos statim ascendere naviculam, ne vanam gloriam haberent de aliquibus quae audierant de miraculo. illo et Luc. 10 ubi reprehendit discipulos suos, qui gloriabantur de miraculis factis. *Videbam*, inquit, *Satanam sicut fulgor de caelo cadentem.*' Pietro d'Alighieri draws directly on Peraldus in his gloss to this episode with a series of precise textual parallels (see Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XII, 1–72).

[59] See *Aeneid* X, 565–66; *Thebaid* II, 596; *Pharsalia* IV, 596. Dante's reference to Apollo, Minerva, and Mars follows closely Statius, *Thebaid* II, 595–99.

[60] As Pietro d'Alighieri notes, Nimrod's purpose in building the tower was also to protect himself and his people from a second flood (God's punishment for sin). See Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XII, 1–72: 'Nembroth cepit facere turrim quandam ascensuram usque ad caelum ne iterum diluvium eos offenderet; ex quo Deus descendit ibi confundens linguam eorum ita quod nullus alium intelligebat.'

[61] See also *Purg.* III, 34–36: 'Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione / possa trascorrer la infinita via / che tiene una sustanza in tre persone' [He is mad who hopes that our reason can traverse the infinite way taken by one Substance in three Persons].

[62] See Scott, 'Canto XII', p. 177: 'Dante intendeva sottolineare l'importanza centrale della venuta del Redentore, il quale con un atto di suprema umiltà (virtú ignota all'antichità pagana), riaprì all'umanità peccatrice le porte del cielo chiese dal primo atto di superbia.'

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Whereas the first quartet of *exempla* directly rebel against God, the principal fault of the second group is indifference or impiety towards God. Nïobe, Saul, Arachne, and Rehoboam fail to recognise that their own excellences – in beauty and fertility, political power, artistic ability, and dynastic line, respectively – are dependent on God. Saul and Rehoboam, the two Scriptural *exempla*, clearly counterpoise King David, the second example of humility. Saul loses kingship of Israel to David because he ignored the word of God: 'quia proiecisti sermonem Domini, proiecit te Deus ne sis rex super Israel' (1 Samuel 15:24–26). Rehoboam is King David's successor and loses the inheritance of Israel: 'recessit Israel a domo David' (2 Kings 12:10–11). Rehoboam's dynastic pride serves to accentuate the disparity with his own life and actions: Dante scornfully highlights Rehoboam's baseless fear as he flees without being pursued (*Purg*. XII, 46–48). Saul, by contrast, serves as a particular warning to souls at the beginning of their Christian life (just as his *exemplum* is introduced here in the first terrace of Dante's Purgatory). When he was humble, Saul was made a king; when he became proud, he was ejected from his throne.[63] The mountain of Gilboa upon which Saul kills himself may be interpreted allegorically as the mountain of pride upon which the soul is damned.[64] In such allegorical readings, Saul is the Old Adam, David the New; Saul is the *Synagoga*, David is the *Ecclesia*.[65] Samuel's words upbraiding Saul become, then, the words of a spiritual master to a backsliding Christian.[66] On this

[63] Saul killed himself in indignation and pride. See Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg*. XII, 40–42: 'et ibi indignatione et superbia in propriam spatham irruit'.

[64] See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. VI, pa. 2 ch. 6, p. 228a–b: 'Est enim mons Gelboe, in quo nec ros nec pluvia descendit. Si omnes montes, qui sunt in circuitu eius visitaret Dominus, a monte tamen superbi transiret. De super non recipit mons iste, nec rorem gratiae, nequi pluvium interioris doctrinae. Fluvius etiam humanae doctrinae non potest ad eum ascendere … In isto monte Saul daemoniacus sive arreptitius factus est.' Delcorno, who also cites this passage, highlights that Dante draws again on this very image in his epistle to the Florentines (Delcorno, "Dante', p. 213). Opposing the Holy Roman Emperor, the Florentines oppose the very will of God: 'Sin prorsus arrogantia vestra insolens adeo roris altissimi, ceu cacumina Gelboe, vos fecit exsortes' (Dante, *Epistola* VI, 11 [3]).

[65] See Pauline Maud Matarasso, *The Redemption of Chivalry: A Study of the Queste de Saint Graal* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), n. 6, p. 116: 'In the earlier chapters of 1 Samuel, Saul is seen as a type of Christ (Bede, In *Samuelam prophetam allegorica expositio*, P.L. 91, 553D and passim; also *Glossa Ordinaria*, P.L. 113, 552C), while in his relationship with David he becomes of course Synogoga over against Ecclesia (Bede, Ibid., 557; in the *Glossa Ordinaria* the Jews are opposed to Christ), and thus the figure of the first-born who has forfeited his heritage (Gen. 25:30–34), of the Old Adam versus the New.'

[66] Bede, *Glossa Ordinaria*, P.L. 113, 601 (cited in Matarasso, n. 6, p. 117): 'Nonne cum humilitatus in animo tuo pro vita praeterita, quae erat sine Deo, ad Ecclesiam venisses, accepta jam fidei et baptismi gratia, caput in exercendis Spiritus fructibus factus es? … Quare ergo, contempta evangelica et apostolica voce, aliam tibi vivendi regulam condere, ac vitiorum spolia congregare maluisti?'

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allegorical reading, Israel signifies a man seeing God; he who neglects to live the Gospel, by contrast, is banished from God's face.[67]

Whereas Saul and Rehoboam, in salvation history, counterpoise King David as just king of Israel, Nïobe and Arachne, from classical mythology, counterpoise King David as the humble cantor of the psalms. On account of her irreligion and impiety, Nïobe's seven male and seven female offspring (the object of her presumptuous boasting) were annihilated by the goddess Latona's two children (Apollo and Artemis).[68] Arachne, in her self-conceit, sets up her artistry against God, disowning its Divine origin. Both inversely mirror King David, the 'umile salmista', who, acknowledging his sin and unworthiness, becomes the mouthpiece of God.[69] By approaching these four examples as a group, the intended moral import of these stories on the reader also becomes clear. Ovid emphasises that Nïobe knew Arachne's story and her fate, but she failed to imbibe the moral lesson. Now, the story of Arachne has become 'true' in her own life (*Metamorphoses* VI, 146–52). Similarly, Rehoboam failed to learn the appropriate moral lesson from Saul's fate in the history of Israel. These failures of reading in the two Scriptural and the two pagan *exempla* reveal at the microlevel the danger for Dante's readers if they do not relate the *exempla* to their own lives. Dante's readers, like the people of Thebes after the annihilation of Nïobe's children, must learn the moral lesson and be moved to religion and piety (*Met*. VI, 396–99).

The third quartet of *exempla* highlights the effect of an individual's pride on society as a whole. The folly of vanity in corporeal beauty and possessions is embodied by the first sinner of Dante's third group, Eriphyle, who betrayed her husband, sending him to a certain death, to gain a necklace intended for a goddess ('lo sventurato addornamento'). Eriphyle's vanity also causes, albeit indirectly, the Theban war, just as Helen's vanity had led, ultimately, to the destruction of Troy. The contrast

[67] Ibid.: 'Israel namque vir videns Deum interpretatur.'

[68] Pietro Alighieri interprets her example allegorically: Nïobe is the irreligion of pride; her seven sons and daughters the seven acts of pride in men and women. See Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg*. XII, 37–39: 'Et ideo allegorizatur Niobe, idest superbia: Latona, religio: Diana, castitas. Septem filii Niobis sunt septem actus superbiae in mare, et septem filiae ejus septem actus superbiae in femina; scilicet superbus pedum incessus, pectoris supinatio, manuum gestus, linguae verbalis indignatio, nasi frontatio, supercilii elevatio, oculorum semipatentia. Et sic in proposito religio creat sapientiam et castitatem, quae superbos actus habent occidere.'

[69] As the Oderisi episode has clear autobiographical implications, so, from its earliest readers, the story of Arachne has been seen as a negative image, or dangerous tendency, of Dante's verse. See, for example, Pamela Royston Macfie, 'Ovid, Arachne and the Poetics of Paradise', in *The Poetry of Allusion*, ed. by Rachel Jacoff and Jeffrey Schnapp (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 159–72.

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with Trajan is, in this context, striking: Trajan prefers the administration of justice on behalf of a poor widow to the vanity of Imperial pomp. Moreover, the widow who demands justice for her son's death inverts the story of Eriphyle, whose son, avenging his father's death, made his mother's necklace truly dear ('caro') by taking her life (*Purg.* XII, 49–51).[70] The three Imperial and military leaders who follow – Sennacherib (king of Assyria), Cyrus (emperor of Persia), and Holofernes (Assyrian general) – also provide clear counter-examples to the just Emperor Trajan. Gregory the Great emphasises that a king's pride leads to the destruction of his people.[71] A scourge of God's providence (2 Kings 19:25), Sennacherib and his army are miraculously annihilated because of his presumption against the God of Israel. Just as Eriphyle's betrayal led to the destruction of Thebes, so Sennacherib sought to destroy the city of Jerusalem. Also like Eriphyle (his pagan foil), Sennacherib is murdered by his sons.[72] The matricide of Eriphyle and the patricide of Sennacherib are immediately followed by the twin decapitations of Cyrus and Holofernes. Cyrus is another failed emperor: his conquests for Persia are presented as entirely bloodthirsty.[73] Most significantly, Cyrus's savage decapitation serves as the pagan analogue to the decapitation of the Assyrian general Holofernes by the Jewish widow Judith.[74] Whereas Israel is saved from Sennacherib's army by God's direct intervention, Israel is saved from Holofernes by the virtue and courage of Judith.

[70] The first pair of examples – Saul and Arachne – highlight the self-destructiveness of denying the supernatural origin of their power or talent. Their suicides (attempted suicide only in Arachne's case, as her noose becomes a spider's thread) are extensions of this pride: their last means to destroy their dependence on God is to destroy themselves as images of God.

[71] See Lellia Cracco Ruggini and Giorio Cracco, 'Gregorio Magno e i "Libri dei Re"', in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, ed. by Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), vol. 2, pp. 223–58: 'Il tema della superbia dei re, che porta alla rovina loro e i loro popoli è ricorrente in Gregorio, sopratutto nei *Moralia* (22.35), . . . ma a maggior ragione nella *Expositio*, dove riporta e commenta il rimprovero di Dio a Saul: *Nonne, cum parvulus esses in oculis tuis, caput in tribubus Israel factus es?*' (p. 241, n. 73).

[72] Building upon the drama of the Scriptural source also quoted by Peraldus ('filii eius percusserunt eum gladio'), Dante has Sennacherib's sons literally throw themselves on top of their father ('i figli si gittaro / sovra Sennacherib'; *Purg.* XII, 53). See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. VI, pa. 2 ch. 6, pp. 221b–222a.

[73] Whereas Trajan enacts justice for the death of the widow's son, Thamyis, the queen of the Scythians, exacted her own justice for the murder of her son by Cyrus. Murdering him, she cast his head in a bladder full of blood with the words: 'Sangue sitisti, e io di sangue t'empio' (*Purg.* XII, 57).

[74] Peraldus devotes particular attention to Holofernes, who is naturally paired with Nabuchadnezzar. Holofernes, like Sennacherib, had defied the 'god of Israel' and had claimed that there was no God other than Nabuchadnezzar: 'ostendam tibi, quod non est Deus nisi Nabuchodonosor' (Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. VI, pa. 2 ch. 6, p. 222a). His murder leads, then, to the flight of the Assyrians: 'come in rotta si fuggiro / li Assiri' (*Purg.* XII, 58–59).

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The two outside enemies of Israel (Sennacherib and Holofernes) thus balance the two failed leaders of Israel (Saul and Rehoboam). The backdrop to these four Scriptural examples is, in other words, Jerusalem. This is particularly significant given the climax to the sequence of *exempla*, Troy:

> Vedeva Troia in cenere e in caverne:
> o Ilïon, come te basso e vile
> mostrava il segno che lì si discerne!
> (*Purg.* XII, 61–63)
>
> [I saw Troy in ashes and cavernous ruins: O Ilion, how long
> and vile the carving seen there showed you to be!]

Troy's prideful fall leads to the foundation of the Roman *imperium* by Aeneas, whose arrival in Italy – in Dante's syncretic view of global history – coincides with the birth of King David (*Conv.* IV, v, 6). The temporal power of Israel, however, is ultimately subjected to the Roman Empire because, in the Christian era, the true Jerusalem is in Heaven. The final image of the city of Troy in ashes and ruins is, therefore, also a pagan analogue for the earthly Jerusalem which – for its proud rejection of Christ and its continued belligerence against Rome – was destroyed by Titus (*Par.* VI, 82–93).[75]

These parallels between the three 'quartets' of prideful examples and the three *exempla* of humility are striking and, in each case, illustrate both sides of the comparison. We better understand King David as a model of humility in kingship (*Purg.* X, 49–72) in relation to his predecessor Saul and successor Rehoboam, and as a model of humble artistry in relation to Nïobe and Arachne (*Purg.* XII, 37–48). The same is true for the counterpoint between Mary and Omberto, King David and Oderisi, and Trajan and Salvani. In this way, medieval preachers used *exempla* to articulate the true path of the Christian moral life, as well as the potential stumbling blocks along the way. Reading *Purgatorio* X–XII as a triptych does not just provide possible interpretative solutions to particular hermeneutic *cruces* in individual cantos, then. Instead, from the perspective of penitence, this 'parallel reading' illustrates how a sinner (Omberto, Oderisi, and Salvani were Dante's near contemporaries) might reflect upon his or her own life in relation to models of virtue. Dante-character embodies this process for the reader, recognising aspects of his own pride through the lives of the

[75] Trajan's justice in retribution for the murder of the widow's son may reflect, from the perspective of Dante's view of providential history, Titus's justice in retribution for the murder of Mary's son, Jesus.

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three souls he encounters. As we see Dante adopting in Purgatory the role of a vernacular preacher against vice, it is clear that Dante does not intend that we, as readers, simply provide a detached theological reading of the terrace of pride. Rather, at every point in the narrative, Dante seeks to engage his readers directly, to provoke the prick of conscience that might lead to conversion. Auerbach was surely right, then, when he saw in the opening poem of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* an echo of Dante's address to his reader as 'hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère'.[76]

[76] See Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 298: 'in the Christian era a new relationship had developed between the speaker or writer and his audience: the author no longer curried favor, but admonished, preached, and instructed. This form of address to the reader has two special characteristics: in principle the author directed his criticism not at any specific vice or section of society but at the corruption of fallen man as such; and the second characteristic, which follows from the first but requires special mention, is that the writer or speaker identified himself with those he was addressing. The consequence is an interweaving of accusation and self-accusation, earnestness and humility, the superiority of the teacher and brotherly love.' Auerbach notes: 'As so often Baudelaire at once echoes and caricatures a Christian theme: *Hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère* . . .' (Ibid., n. 116).

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CHAPTER 6

The Terrace of Sloth, and the Sin of Scholars

Dante explicitly associates himself with the sin of pride (*Purg.* XIII, 133–38), and scholars have emphasised, in particular, the temptation to pride in the composition of the *Commedia* itself.[1] By contrast, Dante makes no such explicit association between himself and the sin of sloth. Sloth might seem a strange sin to ascribe to the poet whose *magnum opus*, he informs us, had made him for many years lean (*Par.* XXV, 3).The terrace of sloth, nonetheless, is privileged by Dante: structurally, it is at the literal centre of *Purgatorio* and thus of the poem as a whole; narratively, it is midway (*nel mezzo del cammin*) both through Purgatory (the fourth of seven terraces) and through the afterlife (the fourth day on the pilgrim's seven-day journey); thematically, it includes the discourses on ordered and disordered love as the Christian principles of moral good and evil respectively. Moreover, the very first group of souls whom Dante encounters on his journey through Hell (the 'wretched souls' of *Inferno* III, 35) are partly characterised by sloth, as are the 'sad souls' (*tristi*) who emit the 'accidioso fumo' of *Inferno* VIII.[2] Sloth dominates the moral colour of Ante-Purgatory (*Purgatorio* I–VIII), a region invented by Dante and occupied specifically by those who delayed, albeit in different ways, their conversions to the path of Christian holiness and penitence.[3] Likewise, sloth is associated with the very first group of blessed souls whom Dante-character encounters in Paradise, the 'slowest sphere' of the Moon (*Par.* III, 30).

[1] See, for example, Teodolinda Barolini, 'Arachne, Argus, and St. John: Transgressive Art in Dante and Ovid', *Mediaevalia* (1987), 14, 207–26: 'One cannot cite Dante's scribal role, his avowed following behind a *dittator*, as a sign of his poetic humility; *he* realizes, even if we do not . . . that his is a self-assigned scribal role, destining his humility to plunge towards pride and his pride to convert to humility in dizzying succession' (p. 220).

[2] *Inf.* III, 34–36: 'Questo misero modo / tegnon l'anime triste di coloro / che visser sanza 'nfamia e sanza lodo'. The Biblical subtext is Revelation 3:15: 'Scio opera tua: quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus', a text directly associated by Peraldus, as we shall see, with the vice of tepidity (sloth).

[3] See, for example, Gabrielle Muresco, 'L'accidia e l'orgia d'amore (*Purg.* VIII)', in *L'orgia d'amore: saggi di semantica dantesca* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008), pp. 125–85.

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In each of the three canticles, therefore, the first group of souls is characterised – at least in part – by the vice of sloth. Moreover, after his Christian conversion, sloth was the dominant sin – we learn in Purgatory – of the poet Statius, one of the important autobiographical 'cyphers' for Dante in the *Commedia*. Most significantly, there is good reason to believe, as I shall argue, that sloth is Dante-character's first sin in the dark wood of *Inferno* I, and a key to his dramatic confession to Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise.

Critics have nonetheless paid very little attention to sloth in Dante's moral vision and, with few exceptions, have ruled out the possibility that Dante might have considered himself as guilty of this sin.[4] Why this comparative lack of critical attention? A first reason is that Dante's terrace of sloth (*Purg.* XVII, 79–139 – XIX, 1–69) has rarely been considered as a narrative unit. This is, in part, a familiar consequence of the 'lectura Dantis' canto-by-canto interpretative tradition (the terrace spans three cantos).[5] But, it is also because this central section of Dante's poem is typically read in terms of the 'four doctrinal cantos' (*Purgatorio* XV, XVI, XVII, and XVIII) – a grouping that detaches the 'doctrine' from the 'narrative' of the terrace of sloth, and reinforces a prevalent interpretation

[4] In his account of the seven capital vices in Dante's own moral life, for example, John C. Barnes argues that Dante acknowledges himself as guilty of four sins – pride, envy, lust, and anger – and comes to a normative conclusion about sloth: 'I infer that Dante does not accuse himself of sloth' (John C. Barnes, 'Deadly Sins in Dante's Autobiography', in Barnes and O'Connell [eds.], *Dante*, pp. 319–41 [p. 324]). The most noticeable exception to this consensus about sloth is Pamela Williams. See Pamela Williams, 'Acedia as Dante's Sin in the *Commedia*', in Williams, *Through Human Love to God*, pp. 19–34. But see also the more recent Marco Dorigatti, 'The Acid Test of Faith: Dante and the Capital Sin of *Accidia* (Sloth)', in Barnes and O'Connell (eds.), *Dante*, pp. 151–78. Dorigetti rightly credits Williams with demonstrating that 'the idea of acedia in Dante's spiritual journey is far more pervasive than was previously imagined, having the capacity to show his whole work in an entirely new light' (p. 175). He also provides a suggestive interpretation of sloth in relation to a deficiency in Christian faith: 'Neither Statius nor Dante came to embrace the Christian faith easily or in a straight path' (p. 173). Although his treatment of Dante is brief, Siegfried Wenzel argues that Dante expands the concept of acedia to include 'in the neglect of spiritual duties, care for the temporal order. In harmony with the religious–political ideal set forth throughout the *Commedia*, Dante's *acedia* includes *lento amore* of the Eagle as well as of the Cross.' See Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 128–35. Jennifer Rushworth considers Dante's treatment of 'acedia' in relation to the twentieth-century theories of Barthes and Kristeva. See Jennifer Rushworth, 'Mourning and Acedia in Dante', in Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning*, pp. 18–53.

[5] In eloquently highlighting the limits of the 'lectura Dantis' canto-by-canto reading that 'comporta di solito certo disagio di discontinuità', Chiavacci Leonardi emphasizes that 'nel caso dei così detti canti meditativi nel centro del *Purgatorio* essa si fa più acuta e imbarazzante'. See Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi, 'Canto XVII', in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis: Purgatorio*, ed. by Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), pp. 152–75 (p. 152). However, scholars such as Chiavacci Leonardi recognise this limit insofar as it inhibits the narrative unit of the 'four doctrinal cantos' rather than the narrative unit of the terrace.

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of its final section, the dream of the Siren (*Purgatorio* XIX, 1–69), as an afterthought or a mere transition episode.[6] This perspective is especially problematic because, of the seven terraces of Purgatory, Dante devotes the least number of lines (278) to the terrace of sloth, with less than a quarter of these (68) being devoted to the encounter with the slothful souls who rush past in a flash (*Purg.* XVIII, 76–139).[7] Only one slothful soul, the Abbot of San Zeno, is identified, and his speech lasts just fourteen lines (*Purg.* XVIII, 112–26). Detach the 'doctrinal passages' and the dream of the Siren from the terrace of sloth, and very little is left. A second reason for the lack of scholarly discussion of sloth, then, is that critics summarily pass over Dante's extremely terse description of the slothful souls precisely due to its brevity.

This chapter is, therefore, a reappraisal of Dante's treatment of sloth. I start by demonstrating how Dante's poetic representation of sloth is profoundly influenced by Peraldus's treatise 'De acedia'.[8] Using Peraldus as a gloss, I first reinterpret the encounter with the slothful souls (XVIII, 88–138), whose 'acute fervour' for God impels them to run swiftly around the terrace and past Dante-character and Virgil. Second, I show that the

[6] The first doctrinal exposition (explaining the difference between temporal and spiritual goods) serves as an epilogue to the terrace of envy (*Purg.* XV, 1–81); the second (on free will, the necessity of law, and the 'two suns' of Empire and Church) is at the centre of the terrace of wrath (*Purg.* XVI, 64–145); and the third and longest (concerning the moral structure of Purgatory, the nature of love, and free will and moral responsibility) occupies the first half of the terrace of sloth (*Purg.* XVII, 79–139; *Purg.* XVIII, 1–75). See also Hollander, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 1–3, and Bosco, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, nota. Hollander refers to Bosco's note about the balance of doctrinal instruction and narrative in *Purgatorio* XVII–XVIII. This could be expanded across 'the four doctrinal cantos' in relation to the moral scheme in the following way: envy: XV, 1–81 (doctrine); wrath: 82–145 (narrative); XVI, 1–63 (narrative); 64–145 (doctrine); XVII, 1–69 (narrative); and sloth: 70–139 (doctrine); XVIII, 1–75 (doctrine); 76–145 (narrative). Singleton notes the chiasmus in canto line length, which further situates *Purgatorio* XVII as the central doctrinal canto: 151 lines (*Purg.* XIV and XX); 141 lines (XV and XIX); 145 lines (XVI and XVIII); 139 lines (XVII). See Charles Singleton, 'The Poet's Number at the Centre', *Modern Language Notes* 80 (1965), 1–10; and, more recently, Tristan Kay, 'Seductive Lies, Unpalatable Truths, Alter Egos', in Corbett and Webb (eds.), *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, II, pp. 127–49 (pp. 131–34).

[7] See Hollander, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 99–138: 'With the exception of the concluding interaction with the angel in the following canto, separated by Dante's sleep and dream from the action on the fourth terrace, all the usual "events" of any terrace are here condensed – in the compressed style appropriate to the description of the newly zealous – into these forty verses. All terraces include the following features in the same order: (1) description of the physical aspect of the terrace, (2) exemplars of the countering virtue, (3) description of the penitents, (4) recitation of their sins by particular penitents, (5) exemplars of the vice, (6) appearance to Dante of the angel representing the opposing virtue.'

[8] By contrast, critics in the past have tended to gloss Dante's treatment of sloth with passages from Aquinas. See, most recently, Dorigatti, 'Dante and the Capital Sin of "Accidia"'. A major flaw in Dorigatti's reading, in my view, is that he interprets Dante's treatment of sloth (and, despite Wenzel's intervention, Virgil's discourse on the moral rationale of Purgatory) through Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, with no reference at all to Peraldus.

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slothful souls' physical movement and liturgical cries (xviii, 88–138) interrupt the other (but typically overlooked) narrative drama of the terrace: namely, Dante-character's intellectual movement from ignorance to knowledge, a quest for wisdom in tension with his severe physical and mental exhaustion (xvii, 73–xviii, 87; and xviii, 139–xix, 69).[9] Third, I argue that the dream of the Siren (xviii, 139–xix, 69) represents symbolically and poetically the doctrinal content of Virgil's three lectures in the first part of the terrace (xvii, 73–xviii, 87). Finally, I consider the recurring presence of sloth in Dante's moral vision as a whole, in particular with regard to Dante-character's first sin and the alleged sloth of the 'Christian' Statius.

Reading Peraldus on Sloth

In addressing Dante's reliance on Peraldus, Wenzel points out 'that Dante's son Pietro, in commenting upon *Purgatorio* xvii, quoted Peraldus's rationale, though without acknowledging the author'.[10] Wenzel proceeds to present the apposite passages from Peraldus's treatise and Pietro's commentary side-by-side, adequately substantiating his claim that 'the verbal similarities between the two texts are so great as to cancel any doubt that Pietro's was derived from Peraldus'.[11] Somewhat surprisingly, in turning to Dante's poetic depiction of sloth in his magisterial study *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature*, Wenzel does not explore further correlations with Peraldus in any detail.[12] Moreover, Wenzel does not make the connection between Dante's rationale occurring in the terrace of sloth and Peraldus's rationale occurring in a passage immediately following on from his own treatment of sloth.[13] Most significantly, Wenzel relies exclusively on the first of three versions of Pietro d'Aligheri's commentary for his influential account.[14]

[9] Jennifer Rushworth argues compellingly that the physical movement and cries of the penitent slothful embody the two traditional remedies, physical and verbal, for acedia: namely, manual work and prayer or Scriptural invocation: 'The souls on this terrace are thus engaged not only in running but also in a liturgical discipline that counteracts their lack of clear speech or attention in church during their lifetimes' (p. 39). See Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning*, pp. 35–42.

[10] Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', p. 532.

[11] Ibid., p. 532.

[12] Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, pp. 128–35.

[13] Wenzel notes only that it is placed at the beginning of Peraldus's treatment of pride, and fails to point out that Peraldus's treatise on pride comes after his treatise on sloth (Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', p. 531).

[14] *Petri Allegherii super Dantis ipsius genitori Comoediam Commentarium,* ed. by Vincenzo Nannuci (Florence: G. Piatti, 1845). This is also available online as Pietro Alighieri [1], 1340–1342, at the Dartmouth Dante Project.

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The first version (dated to 1340–42) and the second version (dated to 1344–55) of Pietro's commentary are almost identical in their treatment of sloth.[15] But Pietro's third version (dated to 1359–64) is much longer than the previous two in general and strikingly different in its treatment of sloth.[16] In the first two versions, Pietro provides an extremely brief introduction to the terrace of sloth.[17] In versions 1 and 2, he then proceeds to explicate Virgil's doctrinal lecture through Peraldus's rationale – albeit, in Wenzel's words, reducing 'the redundant and clumsy phrasing of Peraldus's scholastic Latin to a more classical elegance'.[18] By contrast, in his third version, Pietro opens his commentary on the terrace of sloth by directly quoting a series of passages from Peraldus's treatise on the vice.[19] Notably, Pietro [3] names ten of the seventeen vices of sloth in exactly the same order as Peraldus: '*tepiditas, mollities, somnolentia, otiositas, dilatio, tarditas, negligentia,* [*imperfectio sive imperseverantia, remissio, dissolutio, incuria*], *ignavia,* [*indevotio*], *tristitia, taedium vitae,* [*desperatio*]'.[20] Like Peraldus, Pietro [3] also highlights that the first species of sloth is 'tepidity', noting that all the other vices of sloth flow from tepidity, as from a root, ('tepiditas prima species radix dicitur accidiae, et ex ea nascuntur omnia praemissa vitia').[21]

[15] *Petri Allegherii super Dantis ipsius genitoris Comoediam Commentarium,* partially ed. by Silvana Pagana. The text is transcribed into electronic form by Giovanna Puletti at the Societa Dantesca Italiana, and available online as Pietro Alighieri [2], at the Dartmouth Dante Project.

[16] Pietro Alighieri, *Comentum super poema Comedie Dantis: A Critical Edition of the Third and Final Draft of Pietro Alighieri's 'Commentary on Dante's "Divine Comedy"*', ed. by Massimiliano Chiamenti (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002). For a brief introduction to the three commentaries, see 'Introduction', pp. 1–4. See also 'V. Pietro Alighieri's Library', pp. 69–76. Strangely, Chiamenti makes no reference to Peraldus with regard to either Pietro's library or the cited passages in the terrace of sloth (p. 384). Pietro's third commentary is available online as Pietro Alighieri [3], 1359–1364, at the Dartmouth Dante Project.

[17] Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 85–87: 'Ad secundam partem auctor, debendo venire ad tractandum de vitio accidiae, praemittit de amore et eius natura; et merito, cum accidia sit eius privatio; et procedit sic' [In the second part [of the terrace] the author, needing to treat the vice of sloth, speaks first of love and the nature of love, and rightly so, for sloth is its lack, and proceeds in this way].

[18] Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', p. 532.

[19] To begin with, Pietro quotes from the first chapter of the second part of Peraldus's treatise on the vice: the second part concerns the different kinds of sin ('de diversis generibus peccatorum') belonging to sloth, and its first chapter addresses the sin of tepidity and the evils which it causes in man (Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 1, pp. 174b–75b; and Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139).

[20] The square brackets denote those sub-species of slothful vices listed by Peraldus but not by Pietro [3]. Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 1, pp. 174b–75a; and Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139. It is worth noting the markedly different ordering of Aquinas, who follows Gregory (see *STh.*, IIaIIae, q. 35, a. 4).

[21] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139. See also Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 1, p. 175a: 'Et videtur esse tepiditas prima radix in peccato acediae, et ex hac videntur nasci cetera vitia enumerata. Facit autem tepiditas multa mala in homine.'

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Even stronger proof that Pietro [3] is following Peraldus more closely, however, appears in the next part of his commentary. Having defined tepidity as insufficient love of the good ('tepiditas est parvus amor boni'), Peraldus emphasises that tepidity provokes the 'vomit' of God, as he has already demonstrated ('primo Deo vomitum provocat, ut prius ostensum est').[22] In his commentary, Pietro [3] defines tepidity as 'amor parvus boni magni' and then supplies, with only very slight changes, the earlier section of Peraldus's treatise referred to (the beginning of part II, chapter 3):

> 'Utinam frigidus esses aut calidus: sed quia tepidus es et nec frigidus nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.' Calidus est, qui fervens est ad bonum. Frigidus est, qui simpliciter desistit a bono. Tepidus vero est, qui medio modo se habet. Et dixit *Glossa interlinearis* quod maior spes est de frigidis, quam de tepidis. Cuius rei haec est causa, quod tepidi quandam fiduciam et securitatem accipiunt de hoc, quod aliquid boni agunt, et ideo se non corrigunt. (Peraldus, *De vitiis*)[23]

> 'Utinam frigidus esses aut calidus, sed quia tepidus es et non frigidus nec calidus incipiam te evomere ex ore meo'; est enim calidus qui fervens est ad bonum, frigidus est qui simpliciter desistit a bono, tepidus vero qui medio modo se habet, et dicit ibi inter linearia quod maior spes est de frigidis quam de tepidis, eo quia tepidi quendam fiduciam accipiunt de hoc quod aliquid boni agunt, et ideo se non corrigunt. (Pietro d'Alighieri, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139)[24]

> ['If only you were cold or hot, but because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth.' Hot is he who is fervent towards the good. Cold is he who simply stands apart from the good. Lukewarm is he who holds the middle way. And therefore the *Glossa interlinearis* said that there is a greater hope for the cold than for the lukewarm. The cause of which is that the lukewarm derive some trust and security from the fact that they do some good, and therefore they do not correct themselves].

These 'verbal similarities' between Peraldus and Pietro [3] with regard to sloth, like those identified by Wenzel between Peraldus and Pietro [1] with

[22] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 1, p. 175a. See also t. v, pa. 1, ch. 3, pp. 168a–b: 'De hac tepiditate dicit Hieronymus: "Tepiditas sola est, quae solet Deo vomitum provocare."'

[23] Ibid., t. v, pa. 1, ch. 3, pp. 168a. The Biblical passage cited is Revelation 3:15–16: 'Scio opera tua, quia neque frigidus es neque calidus. Utinam frigidus esses aut calidus! Sic quia tepidus es et nec calidus nec frigidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.'

[24] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139.

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regard to the rationale, are 'so great as to cancel any doubt that Pietro's was derived from Peraldus'.[25]

If this suggests that Dante himself was following Peraldus's text closely, his own poetic treatment – as we shall see – would seem to confirm it. Remarkably, thirteen of the seventeen vices of sloth delineated by Peraldus may be identified – whether as directly named, substantial allusions or verbal echoes – in Dante's terrace of sloth, alongside the opposing vice of indiscreet fervour: *tepiditas* (*Purg.* XVIII, 108); *mollities* (XVIII, 136–37); *somnolentia* (XVII, 87–88); *otiositas* (XVIII, 101–2); *dilatio* (XVII, 90); *tarditas* (XVII, 87); *negligentia* (XVIII, 107); *imperfectio sive imperseverantia* (XVIII,137); *remissio, dissolutio* (XVI, 73 and XVIII, 124–25); *incuria* (XVIII, 85–86); *ignavia, indevotio, tristitia* (XVIII, 123); *taedium vitae* (XVIII, 121); and *desperatio* (XVIII, 120).[26] The cumulative impression is that Peraldus's preaching material provides the key resource for Dante's poetic treatment. A comparative examination of Peraldus's treatise and Dante's terrace of sloth suggests, then, possible interpretative solutions to passages, lines, and individual words in these cantos which have puzzled scholars in the critical tradition. Just as significantly, it opens up the depth and breadth of the contemporary understandings of acedia that informed Dante's thinking, enabling us to understand sloth as a scholar's and a poet's sin.

Purging Sloth

Arriving at the terrace of sloth as night falls, Virgil informs Dante-character that here the souls, in penance, make up for lost time, plying and plying again the badly slowed oar ('il mal tardato remo'; XVII, 87). Slothful in life, the souls had been like oarsmen who had known where they were heading (their goal) but had lacked due energy and care. More technically, Virgil defines the quiddity of sloth as 'l'amor del bene, scemo / del suo dover' [the love of the good falling short of its proper duty] (85–86). In a second definition, he makes more explicit that this good is God, while

[25] Wenzel, 'Dante's Rationale', p. 532. Even in relation to Peraldus's rationale itself, Pietro's third commentary displays a closer intellectual engagement with the original than his first two. See Ibid., pp. 532–33, and compare with Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139: 'ita ait Augustinus, quem auctor ad licteram hic sequitur: *Sicut virtus est amor ordinatus, ita vitium est amor inordinatus. Amor dupliciter potest esse inordinatus*.' In his conclusion, for example, Pietro [3] re-emphasises Dante's purpose in situating the moral rationale on the terrace of sloth: 'Et sic, concludendo, vitium accidiae facit peccare ut lentos et tepidos ad sequendum et acquirendum verum bonum, scilicet Deum, quod bonum omnis appetunt, sed confuse, ut dicit hic auctor.'

[26] I discuss these sub-vices and the salient passages of *Purgatorio* XVII–XIX in detail later in this chapter.

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emphasising again the metaphor of speed – their love, in being deficient, is *slow*: 'lento amore a lui veder vi tira / o a lui acquistar' [slow love draws you to see him [God] or to acquire him] (130–31). Sometime later, when the group of penitent souls rush past Virgil and Dante-character, it comes as no surprise, then, that they cry out:

> 'Ratto, ratto, che 'l tempo non si perda
> per poco amor,' gridavan li altri appresso,
> 'che studio di ben far grazia rinverda!'
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 103–5)

['Quickly, quickly, that time not be lost through lack of love,' cried the others following, 'let eagerness to do well make grace grow green'].

Thus, like Peraldus, Dante describes and defines the genus acedia by its primary species – namely, tepidity or lukewarmedness, the insufficient love of a great good (*amor parvus boni magni*).[27] Following Peraldus, Dante also treats tepidity as the root of the other vices of sloth, as is evident from Virgil's address to the penitent slothful:

> O gente in cui fervore aguto adesso
> ricompie forse negligenza e indugio
> da voi per tepidezza in ben far messo.
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 106–8)

[O people in whom ardent fervour now perhaps makes up for negligence and delay that you, because tepid, brought your good works].

Virgil understands the slothful souls' negligence ('negligenza'; 107) and delay ('indugio'; 107) to have arisen from their tepidity ('tepidezza'; 108), while the souls themselves acknowledge that their previous time-wasting ('il tempo non si perda'; 103) occurred because of a lack of love ('per poco amor'; 104).

The souls expiate their sloth by first urging each other to value and conserve time (103). From a Christian perspective, as Peraldus emphasises, time is a precious gift from God that must be used well to provide for the eternal life that awaits: a person 'sows eternity from time, that it may be harvested in the future'.[28] Christians, then, are debtors to God for their

[27] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139: 'et ex hoc auctor in hoc principio, in persona Virgilii diffiniendo, vocat accidiam amorem scemum, idest diminutum in suo debere amare, subaudi Deum, ut summum bonum, unde diffinitur: *Tepiditas est amor parvus boni magni.*' Wenzel notes how a Latin rendering of Dante's definition 'amare bonum minus quam est debitum' would echo more directly Peraldus's 'parvus amor magni boni' (Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 129); Wenzel also references Peraldus's sermons (p. 242, n. 8) in which sloth is defined as a small care for great goods ('acedia, quae magna bona modicum curat').

[28] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1 ch. 3, p. 172a: 'Et conservatio temporis in hoc attenditur ut in Dei servitio expendatur, et sic ex tempore quodammodo seminat aeternitas, in futuro colligatur.'

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time on Earth and will be called to account for how they have used it.[29] Dante's visualised eschatology itself preaches two of Peraldus's reasons for conserving time: that there is a place (Hell) in which one hour for doing penitence would be loved more than all the world's gold, and that in just one hour (on Earth) a man may merit the remission of his eternal punishment, of all his sins, and – with God's grace – eternal glory.[30] Dante's parallel representation of Guido and Buonconte da Montefeltro (*Inferno* XXVII and *Purgatorio* V) is, of course, just the most obvious instance of him driving this message home.

As the souls purging sloth make clear, their 'conservation of time' (103) has a purpose: they are eager to do well ('studio di ben far'; 105), so as to make up for their previous 'indugio' [delay] (106). This highlights the importance of the offshoot vice of 'negligence' (107): its opposing virtue is not 'activity' per se, but rather diligence or 'doing well'. As Peraldus notes, the negligent man does not care how well his work is done (whether good or bad), but just wants to get it out of the way.[31] The diligent person, by contrast, strives for excellence in the work that he has begun.[32] Thus, the slothful souls' 'studio di ben far' (105; 108) translates Peraldus's definition of 'diligence' ('studeat ut opus inchoatum bene fiat') and corrects, as Virgil rightly notes, their previous negligence ('negligenza'; 107).[33]

Where diligence is the corresponding virtue to the subordinate slothful vice of negligence, the corresponding virtue to tepidity is zeal. At the vanguard of the crowd of penitent slothful, two 'weeping' souls cry out two examples of zeal:

> 'Maria corse con fretta a la montagna!'
> e 'Cesare, per soggiogare Illerda,
> punse Marsilia e poi corse in Ispagna!'
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 100–2)

[29] Ibid.: 'Et debemus intelligere brevitatem istam respectu vitae aeternae, cui debemus providere tempore isto.'

[30] Ibid., p. 172b: 'Secundo ostenditur ex hoc, quod aliquis locus est in quo plus amaretur una hora temporis ad agendum poenitentiam, quam tanta massa auri quantus est totus mundus. Locus ille infernus est. Tertio ostenditur ex hoc quod in una hora temporis potest homo promerere dimissionem poenae aeternae et peccatorum suorum remissionem, Dei gratiam, et aeternam gloriam.'

[31] Ibid., t. v, pa. 2 ch. 7, p. 199a: 'Et attenditur negligentia in hoc, quod homo non curat qualiter opus inchoatum faciat, utrum bene vel male: sed hoc solum curat, ut ab onere laboris inchoati se expediat.'

[32] Ibid.: 'Et attenditur diligentia in hoc, quod homo ad hoc studeat, ut opus inchoatum bene fiat.'

[33] Dante's horticultural metaphor ('grazia rinverda'; 105) could also be taken from Peraldus's chapter on the vice of negligence, with the citation of Proverbs ('Diligenter exerce agrum tuum') and the example from nature ('diligentiam habet natura circa fructus arborum'), both emphasising the opposing virtue of diligence (Ibid., t. v, pa. 2 ch. 7, p. 199a).

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['Mary ran with haste to the mountain!' and 'Caesar, to subdue Lerida, struck Marseilles and then hastened to Spain'].

Notably, in his treatment of zeal, Peraldus gives examples both of those saintly men and women who loved God, and of those noble pagans who loved the world.[34] In the first category, we find Dante's Biblical example: Mary's haste in going to visit her cousin Elizabeth.[35] Dante's second example, Julius Caesar, corresponds to Peraldus's second category: the extraordinary accomplishments of pagans out of love for the world (*qui amant mundum*) serve to upbraid Christians who, in their sloth, accomplish so little through their love of God despite the promise of eternal bliss.[36] Glossing Matthew 11:12, Peraldus comments that whereas the Christian martyrs assault the kingdom of Heaven with their virtue, the same cannot be said of the lazy and slothful ('acediosi et pigri'); moreover, he warns the Christian that if he is slothful in this life, he will lose a place in heaven.[37] Dante will turn to precisely this passage in the heaven of Justice ('*Regnum celorum* vïolenza pate' [The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence]; *Par*. XX, 94) to warn that many Christians who will cry 'Christ, Christ' at the final judgement will be less close to Him than a man who does not know Christ at all; in this way, the Ethiopian (pagan) will damn

[34] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 1, pp. 166a–b: 'Potest etiam valere ad detestationem acediae exemplum eorum qui amant mundum. Si enim respiciamus quot et quantis laboribus, quotidianis cruciatibus ipsi merentur cruciatum aeternum, satis poterimus confundi quod adeo sumus pigri laborare pro regno aeterno. Unde Augustinus: "O si possemus excitare homines et cum ipsis pariter excitari, ut tales essemus amatores vitae permanentis quales sunt homines amatores vitae fugientis: quis non ut viveret, et potius eligeret vitam mendicandam quam celerem mortem?"'

[35] See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 1, p. 167a: 'Et de beata Virgine legitur Luc. 1. "Quod abiit in montana cum festinatione."'

[36] Pietro d'Aligheri, moreover, interprets Caesar as not wanting to remain in sloth (Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg*. XVIII, 76–96: 'secundo quod scribit Lucanus in III de Cesare qui, obtenta Roma cedentibus ei Pompeio et senatoribus, noluit ibi manere in otio sed statim in Yspaniam ivit ad civitatem Ylerde, dimisso Bruto in obsidione Marsilie civitatis provincie etiam se rebellantis sibi, quatenus ambas urbes tandem obtinuit'.

[37] Matt. 11:12: 'Regnum caelorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud' [The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent seize it]. Commenting on the ordinary gloss on this passage ('Grandis violentia est in terra nasci et caelum capere et habere per virtutem quod per naturam non possumus'), Peraldus notes that it is hardly likely that a slothful person will make such an assault on Heaven; rather, the slothful man advances so slowly that he will lose his place in heaven, and the goods of grace will be taken from him ('Non est verisimile quod acediosus talem violentiam caelo faciat. Acediosus adeo lente incedit quod in caelo locum suum amittit. Aufert etiam acedia bona gratiae'). Peraldus also cites St Gregory's warning that the just man – in an effort to capture Heaven – will be sure not to waste a day of his life ('Iustus ut caelestia capiat, cavet ne inanis dies eat'), and that no one should slow down in the journey of this life, lest they should lose their place in heaven ('Nemo in huius vitae itinere torpeat, ne in patria locum perdat'). See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 1, pp. 171a–b.

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the Christian (*Par*. XIX, 106–11).[38] The driving force of this encounter in the terrace of sloth, therefore, is the souls' 'fervore' [fervour] (106) – their unrelenting speed to make up for lost time, as reflected in the temporal adverbs 'subitamente' [suddenly] (89), 'tosto' [at once] (97), and 'ratto, ratto' [quickly, quickly] (103), and the triple repetition of the verb 'to run' ('correndo . . . corse . . . corse'; 97, 100, 102).

In the context of Peraldus's treatise, Virgil's qualifying reference to the souls' 'fervore' [fervour] as 'aguto' [ardent or acute] (106) is, however, significant. For Peraldus, the two capital vices of avarice and sloth have opposing vices of excess: prodigality is a reckless giving away of goods, whereas indiscreet fervour is an exaggerated zeal.[39] Dante's equine metaphor – 'falca [. . .] cui buon volere e giusto amor cavalca' [gallop those whose good will and righteous love ride them] (94–96) – is used by Peraldus to describe 'indiscreet fervour'.[40] Highlighting the danger of this indiscreet haste ('ista [indiscreta] festinatio'), especially in novices ('in novitiis'), Peraldus notes that he who vexes his horse too much in the morning does not make a good diet in the day: the soul must have a bridle as well as a spur, and the body is not to be broken but rather to be ruled ('corpus non frangendum sed regendum est').[41] It is then doubly significant, as with the qualifier 'aguto' [ardent] in 'fervore aguto' [ardent fervour], that Dante employs the adjectives 'buon' [good] and 'giusto' [just] to qualify the 'volere' [will] and 'amor' [love] that ride the penitent soul (96). Similarly, Mary runs ('corse') with haste ('con fretta', translating

[38] Dante contrasts the shameful sins of Christian rulers (in nine *terzine* delineated by the acrostic 'LVE' [pestilence]; *Par*. XIX, 115–41) with the virtuous lives of pagans (the examples identified are Ripheus and Trajan). Where the former will be damned for eternity, the latter may be saved because the violence of their burning love ('caldo amore') and lively hope ('viva speranza') may overcome ('vince') the divine will, allowing them to capture Heaven. On the question of pagan salvation in relation to this episode, see Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 126–27.

[39] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 4, ch. 1, pp. 209a–b: 'Sicut in vitio Avaritiae tractavimus de vitio prodigalitatis, eo quod avaritia et prodigalitas vitia sunt opposita: sic cum acedia tractabimus de indiscreto fervore. Acedia enim et indiscretus fervor quodammodo videntur esse vitia opposita.'

[40] See Durling and Martinez, gloss to *Purg*. XVIII, 94–96, p. 305: 'Already implicit in the mention of trampling (line 92), the horse metaphor becomes explicit here. The term *falcata* [being like a scythe], as Parodi observed, is used of the headlong gallop of a horse, when its legs (especially the forelegs) form a scythre-like curve.'

[41] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 4, ch. 2 pp. 210a–b: 'Ille qui equum suum nimis fatigat in mane, non videtur facere in die bonam dietam. Sequitur etiam ex indiscreto fervore, peccatum superbiae et vanae gloriae. Unde quidem corpus non frangendum, sed regendum est'; Ibid., t. v, pa. 4, ch. 3, p. 211b: 'Tertia est, quod cum ipsi habeant equum valde impetuosum, non curant tamen frenum imponere ei, sed solum calcaribus sunt contenti, quum tamen constet frenum non minus necessarium esse equo, quam calcaria. Non minus periculosum est alicui inter hostes esse sine freno, quam sine calcaribus. Bernardus: "Bonae voluntati non semper credendum est, sed frenanda et regenda est, maxime in incipiente."'

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the Latin vulgate 'festinatio'), but not – it should be underlined – with indiscreet haste ('festinatio indiscreta').[42]

Peraldus's chapter on indiscreet fervour may even underly a further, peculiar description of the penitent souls' movement:

> . . . Noi siam di voglia a muoverci sì pieni,
> che restar non potem: però perdona,
> se villania nostra giustizia tieni.
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 115–17)
>
> [We are so full of the desire to move that we cannot stop;
> therefore forgive us if our justice seems villainy to you].

Citing the interlinear gloss on Ecclesiastes, 'Noli esse iustus multum' [Be not just to excess], Peraldus notes that there are some 'who do not in any way want to condescend to the demands of the flesh', of whom 'justice is a great injustice' ('iustitia magna iniustitia est').[43] The Abbot of San Zeno is similarly concerned lest the souls' justice ('nostra giustizia'; 117) will seem villainous to Dante and Virgil, because they do not pause in their journey.

The first part of the encounter concerns the whole group of slothful souls (XVIII, 88–117), spans ten *terzine*, and includes the two *exempla* of virtue (97–105). The second part concerns just three penitents: the Abbot of San Zeno and two other souls 'behind all the others' ('di retro a tutti'; 133); it spans seven *terzine*, and includes the two *exempla* of vice (130–38). Whereas the first part concerns the vice of sloth in general, the second part's theme is arguably more specific: the way in which sloth particularly afflicts contemplatives. This narrative structure may itself have been suggested by the order of Peraldus's treatise, in which the chapter on conserving time is immediately followed by a section on how sloth corrupts the most beautiful part of the church ('ipsa inquinat pulchriorem partem Ecclesiae'), which is the contemplatives ('scilicet viros contemplativos').[44]

[42] Although Durling and Martinez are correct to comment that 'the souls' "good will and just love" are imagined as riders driving their horses', in light of my analysis of '*buon* volere', '*giusto* amor', and 'fervore *aguto*', it is not quite right to add, as they do, that they drive their horses 'as fast as they can go' (Durling and Martinez, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 94–96, p. 305). Similarly, in considering the 'hurried procession' of the slothful souls, Wenzel notes their 'almost unseemly fervour' and 'their orgy-like frenzy'; I believe, instead, that Dante is quite deliberately emphasising that they display ardent but *not* indiscreet fervour (Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 76).

[43] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 4, ch. 1 p. 209b: 'Et Eccles. 7: "Noli esse iustus multum". Ibi dicit gloss. interlin. quod summa iustitia, summa iniustitia est. Sunt aliqui qui in nullo volunt condescendere carni, quorum iustitia magna iniustitia est.'

[44] Peraldus, 'De octo quae valere possunt ad temporis conservationem', in Ibid., t. v, pa. 1, ch. 4, pp. 172a–173b; Ibid., t. v, pa. 1, ch. 4, pp. 173b: 'De aliis sex quae valere possunt ad detestationem acediae': 'Primum est hoc, quod ipsa inquinat pulchriorem partem Ecclesiae, scilicet viros

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Moreover, having treated the seventeen species of sloth in seventeen chapters, Peraldus inserts an extra chapter specifically on the sloth of the cloistered religious ('de acedia claustralium').[45]

Scholars have puzzled about the actual identity of the Abbot of San Zeno, and questioned why Dante did not choose a more infamous cleric to counter-balance Hugh Capet (the founder of the Capetian dynasty) in the terrace of avarice.[46] Dante appears to present the Abbot of San Zeno (*Purg.* XVIII, 118) as the only interlocutor to emphasise just how many religious leaders succumb to the vice of acedia, as *pars pro toto*.[47] This is certainly the interpretation of Dante's son, Pietro [3], whose discussion of sloth in contemplatives is taken *verbatim* from Peraldus.[48] Peraldus has scathing words for religious men and women who day and night consume the king's food (the word of God) but are unrestored by it, and who converse with God but do not open their hearts' eyes to see with whom they are speaking.[49] It is a marvel ('est mirum quod') that those – the

contemplativos.' It is notable that Pietro Alighieri glosses this episode (XVIII, 88–108) with extensive quotations from Peraldus's chapter (Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 97–145).

[45] Peraldus, 'De acedia claustralium et duodecim malis quae ex ea proveniunt', in Ibid., t. v, pa. 2, ch.17, pp. 206a–207b. Notably, Peraldus says nothing of the sloth in secular people ('de acedia saecularium nihil dicemus'; p. 206a).

[46] See, for example, Sapegno, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 118: 'abate il monastero annesso alla chiesa di San Zeno in Verona, ai tempi di Federico Barbarossa, era un Gherardo II, morto nel 1187; di cui non sappiamo nulla, e nulla seppero i commentatori antichi del poema'.

[47] On acedia as a peculiarly monastic vice, see also Dorigatti, 'The Acid Test of Faith', p. 152: 'it [acedia] was primarily a monastic vice, and hence, given that the monk was also an intellectual in his day, a *peccatus intellectualis*, something that in retrospect may be regarded as its most distinctive feature. While manual labourers appear to have been virtually immune to it, thinkers, on the other hand, especially those working in solitary confinement, were most at risk. It will be left to Dante to take this relationship between sloth and intellectual work a step further, to be dramatized in one of the *Commedia*'s most emblematic episodes, revealing the intellectual at its centre to be a writer and a poet, just like Dante himself.' See also Ibid., p. 173: 'In the *Commedia*, sloth ceases to be the exclusive domain of the clergy and invades the lay sphere, where the intellectual takes the place formerly occupied by the monk.'

[48] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 97–145: 'Et, ut ostendat auctor quomodo religiosi viri et claustrales hoc vitio accidiae multum occupantur, qui deberent non solum currere, sed volare, cum quasi aves sint spirituales, dicit Bernardus quod "Ad modum testudinum incedunt lentissime", de quibus Ysaia ait: "Qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant sed velut mortui immobiles stant, ex quo habent frequenter orare exemplo David, ut in via Domini vivificentur", fingit se reperire quendam spiritum hic dicentem sibi quomodo fuit abbas in monasterio sancti Zenonis de Verona.' For comparison, see Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 4, pp. 173b: 'Viri enim contemplativi, quorum esset non solum currere sed volare (aves enim spirituales sunt) ad modum testudinum lentissime incedunt. Unde iam non potest dici de illis illud verbum Esaie 40: "Qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant, sed velut mortui immobiles stant?" Unde necesse habent frequenter orare, exemplo David, ut in via Domini vivificentur, et ut pennae columbae eis dentur, ut volare possint et requiescant.'

[49] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch.17, pp. 206a–b: 'Primum est, quod licet die et nocte in ore habeant cibum regium, qui de ore Dei procedit, scilicet verbum Dei: tamen ex pigritia terendi eum famelici remanent, nec reficiuntur de cibo illo . . . Secundum est, quod cum ipsi sint de nocte et de die in

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contemplatives – are the most slothful who least ought to be so ('illi sunt magis acediosi qui minus esse debuerunt').[50]

Peraldus highlights an even stranger feature ('satis admirandum est') of the contemplatives: when they should be most fervent ('quod ferventiores esse deberent') and full of zeal – that is, when closest to death, judgement, and eternal damnation or salvation – they become colder ('frigidiores') and more slothful.[51] In illustrating this puzzling back-sliding of religious (Peraldus is speaking only of 'the religious' in the sense of those in a religious order; i.e., as opposed to the laity) even when near to reaching their goal, Peraldus uses the example of the Israelites ('sicut accidit filiis Israel') who erred for thirty-eight years in the desert and, when they believed themselves closest to the promised land, moved farther from it.[52] This is precisely Dante's Biblical example of sloth, cried aloud by the last two slothful penitents:[53]

> Di retro a tutti dicean: 'Prima fue
> morta la gente a cui il mar s'aperse,
> Che vedesse Iordan le rede sue!'
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 133–35).

[Behind all the others they were saying: 'First of all the people died for whom the sea drew back, before Jordan saw their heirs'].

The two descriptive clauses of Dante's second example of sloth – those followers of Aeneas who, weary of his mission to found Rome, are left behind in Sicily – reflect three further aspects of Peraldus's treatment:

colloquio cum Deo, permittunt tamen multos dies transire, quod non aperiunt oculos cordis, ut videant quis loquatur cum eis, vel quid loquatur. Sicut dicit Gregorius: "Cum oramus, ipsi cum Deo loquimur; cum vero legimus, loquitur nobiscum Deus."'

[50] Ibid., t. v, pa. 1, ch. 4, pp. 173b.

[51] Ibid., t. v, pa. 2, ch.17, p. 207a: 'Sextum est, quod quanto diutius soli iustitiae approximaverunt, tanto frigidiores existunt. Et satis admirandum est, unde hoc accidit. Quanto enim proximiores fiunt, tanto videntur quod ferventiores esse deberent.'

[52] Ibid., t. v, pa. 2, ch.17, p. 207a: 'Sed timendum est, ne nubes alicuius peccati interposita hoc impediat, vel ne per aliquem errorem fiat, ut cum progredi debeant, ingrediantur: et cum deberent appropinquare terrae promissionis, ab ea elongentur. Sicut accidit filiis Israël, qui triginta octo annis in deserto erraverunt. Qui cum crederent appropinquare terrae promissionis, ab ea elongabantur.'

[53] These two souls lag behind ('Di retro a tutti'; *Purg.* XVIII, 133), and Dante must look back to see them ('Volgiti qua'; 131). Virgil describes them, moreover, as biting sloth: 'vedine due / venir dando a l'accidïa di morso' (131–32). The implication from Peraldus's treatise is that these two souls were back-sliding contemplatives who, having had on Earth the greatest reason for zeal, now feel in Purgatory more painfully the guilt (the bite) of their sloth.

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E: 'Quella che l'affanno non sofferse
fino a la fine col figlio d'Anchise
sé stessa a vita sanza gloria offerse!'
(*Purg.* XVIII, 136–38)

[And 'Those women who did not endure hardship to the end
with the son of Anchises, chose life without glory!']

The impatience of hardship ('che l'affanno non sofferse'; 136) is the quiddity of the sub-vice of *mollitia* [weakness]: 'mollis est ille qui cedit duris, idest, tribulationibus secumbit'.[54] This leads, in turn, to the further vice of *inconsummatio* or *imperseverantia* [imperseverance]: the failure to complete a task to the end ('fino a la fine'; XVIII, 137).[55] Notably, Peraldus associates 'mollitia' with an effeminate weakness, an insinuation Dante picks up by explicitly blaming the Trojan women ('quella'; 136).[56] The second descriptive clause, 'sé stessa a vita sanza gloria offerse!' [they chose a life without glory]' (138),[57] reflects Peraldus's admonition that sloth takes the goods of glory away, because these are promised only to the strenuous and the vigilant ('Bona gloriae aufert, quia illa promittuntur solis strenuis et vigilantibus').[58]

We have seen how Dante's description of the slothful souls closely follows the theoretical exposition of Peraldus's treatise. We are now in a position to summarise some key features: Dante defines sloth as tepidity (an insufficient love for God), and sees this lukewarmedness as the root of a whole series of other offshoot vices; his treatment highlights the importance of conserving time, of diligence, and of zeal (albeit not to the excess of indiscreet fervour). Dante perceives sloth as a particularly strong temptation in the contemplative life, and he sees the back-sliding of sloth as endangering one's salvation (the journey to the promised land) and any hope of the good of glory. With these points in mind, let us turn to Dante-character's zealous intellectual movement from ignorance to

[54] Peraldus, 'De mollitie', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch.2, p. 175b.

[55] See, for example, Peraldus, 'De vitio inconsummationis', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch.8, pp. 200b–1a: 'Hoc vitio laborant illi, qui raro ad perfectionem ducunt aliquod opus quod inchoant … Parum etiam prodest per mare laborasse, si tunc navis perierit quando portui proxima fuerit, per leucam unam. Ideo dicitur Proverb. 18: "Qui mollis est et dissolutus in opere suo, frater est sua opera dissipantis."'

[56] See, for example, Peraldus, 'De mollitie', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch.2, p. 175b: '"Tenera autem mulier et delicata, quae super terram ingredi non volebat, nec pedis vestigium figere, propter mollitiem et teneritudinem nimiam."'

[57] Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 136–38: 'Ideo bene dicit: offerse se stessa a vita, idest, ad vivendum in otio, senza gloria, quia non venit cum aliis ad fundandum romanum imperium gloriosum.'

[58] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 3, p. 171a: 'Quomodo acedia auferat homini bona gloriae, gratiae, et naturae.'

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knowledge on the terrace (*Purg.* XVII, 73–XVIII, 87), which the slothful souls' sudden appearance (XVIII, 88–138) briefly interrupts.

Pursuing Wisdom

Where Virgil does not have a body and, therefore, is not subject to physical tiredness, Dante-character's soul is still embodied (he travels *alive* through the land of the dead!). Consequently, when he reaches the terrace of sloth at nightfall (*Purg.* XVII, 70–72), he is so tired that he literally cannot move his feet:

> 'O virtù mia, perché sì ti dilegue?'
> fra me stesso dicea, ché mi sentiva
> la possa de le gambe posta in triegue.
> (*Purg.* XVII, 73–75)

> ['O my strength, why do you dissolve so?' I was saying to myself,
> for I felt a truce imposed on all the power of my legs].

Dante's peculiar use of the Latinism *deliquescere* ('ti dilegue'; 73) evokes how tiredness, although not in itself a sin, can lead to sloth.[59] The etymological sense of the verb – to liquify – suggests the weakness (*mollitia*) of sloth: 'the weak man', Peraldus notes, 'is like a snowman who, in the fire of tribulation, liquifies and is turned into nothing'.[60] Moreover, the meaning – Dante's strength dissolves – evokes the vice of 'dissolutio':

> Hoc vitio laborat ille qui inveniens difficultatem in sui regimine se dimittis omnino absque gubernatione, iuxta illud Proverbiorum 23: 'Erit sicut dormiens in medio mari, et quasi sapiens gubernator amisso clavo.'
>
> [He struggles with this vice who, finding difficulty in governing himself, loses all steering altogether, as it says in Proverbs: 'He will be like someone sleeping in the middle of the sea, and like a wise pilot without a rudder'].

This is precisely the situation of Dante and Virgil here, who are compared to a beached ship ('ed eravamo affissi / pur come nave ch'a la piaggia arriva';

[59] Although tiredness impedes study, it is not in itself a sin. If someone is tired in study, Peraldus notes, it is good for him to rest and, after a short interval, to return to the material ('Tertio impedit diligentiam studii, fatigatio. Unde bonum est, ut quando aliquis videt se fatigatum circa materiam aliquam studendo, quod ipse quiescat, et post quietem ad eandem materiam redeat'; Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 7, p. 200b).

[60] Peraldus, 'De mollitie', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch.2, pp. 175b: 'homo etiam mollis est velut homo niveus, quid ad ignem tribulationis quasi liquefit et ad nihilum redigitur'.

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77–78). Moreover, Virgil's language alludes to the two specifically temporal sub-vices of sloth: *tarditas* [slowness] (87) and *dilatio* [delay] (90).

Despite knowing full well that Dante is absolutely exhausted, Virgil decides to digress, and to deliver an extremely long scholastic lecture – so long, in fact, that it spans two cantos (*Purg.* XVII, 88–XVIII, 75). The psychological drama, then, is that Dante-character is caught between tiredness and the desire to make good use of his time through growth in wisdom. Dante, in other words, is struggling against sloth because, as Peraldus (citing Matthew 26) comments, 'to stay awake with the Lord' ('cum Domino vigilare') means to beware of the drowsiness of sloth following His example.[61] Virgil's doctrinal speeches are not, therefore, parenthetical to the terrace of sloth. As Peraldus highlights, wisdom ('sapientia') is to a man's laziness ('pigritia') as a goad ('stimulus') is to a horse's slowness ('tarditas'), urging him to do good ('verba sapientum . . . excitant hominen ad bonum').[62] Even more significantly, Peraldus argues that in the order of the church, the light of wisdom ('lumen sapientiae') is to be preferred to the cross of penitence ('crux penitentiae').[63] This confirms how Dante-character's doctrinal lesson should itself be understood as correcting sloth, and it helps explain the apparent lack of an external punishment inflicted on the slothful penitents in this terrace. It is their own wills which lead them to move physically, just as it is Dante-character's desire for knowledge (embodied in his questions to Virgil) which leads him to move forward intellectually.

It is a remarkable testament to his virtuous zeal that, even when forced to wait, Dante-character is eager for time not to be wasted: 'Se i piè si stanno, non stea tuo sermone' [Although our feet stand still, let not your

[61] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 3, p. 208b: 'Cum Domino vigilare, est exemplo eius a somno acediae cavere.'

[62] Peraldus, 'De verbis sacrae Scripturae quae laborem suadent et otium vel pigritiam dissuadent', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 2, p. 167a. Peraldus also compares wisdom to fixed spikes ('clavi in altum defixi') that hold a person back from falling into evil ('retinent hominem ne se praecipitet in malis'): 'Stimulus valet contra tarditatem iumentorum: sic verba sapientum contra pigritiam hominum. Et notandum, quod homo laborat quasi contrariis vitiis. Est enim lentus ad bonum, et praeceps ad malum. Sed verba sapientum sunt velut stimuli quando excitant hominem ad bonum. Et sunt velut clavi in altum defixi, dum retinent hominem ne se praecipitet in malis.' Moreover, wisdom should be preferred over physical strength, and the prudent to the strong man, not least because the devil attacks us more with cunning ('astutia') and wisdom ('sapientia') than with strength ('viribus'): 'Tertio requirit hoc ipse hostis contra quem pugnam habemus. Diabolus enim contra hominem pugnat potius astutia et sapientia quam viribus; ideo et nos sapientia contra eum pugnare debemus, non viribus; vires enim non sufficerent resistere sapientiae: quia melior est sapientia quam vires: et vir prudens, quam fortis' (Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 1, p. 209b).

[63] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 4, ch. 3, p. 211a: 'Ordinatum est in ecclesia quod lumen sapientiae cruci poenitentiae praeferendum est.'

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speech do so] (XVII, 84). Moreover, it is his 'thirst' for wisdom (XVIII, 4) that keeps him alert and awake. Dante emphasises that only after he has taken in Virgil's responses to his questions does he again become sleepy:

> Per ch'io, che la ragione aperta a piana
> sovra le mie quistioni avea ricolta,
> stava com' om che sonnolento vana.
> (*Purg.* XVIII, 85–88)

> [Wherefore I, who had harvested an open and clear discussion of my questions, sat as one does whose mind wanders sleepily].

In this way, Dante shows that he has not fallen into the slothful vice of carelessness ('de vitio incuriae') which Peraldus specifically associates with the acquisition and conservation of knowledge.[64] Rather, exhibiting the opposing virtue of 'industria', Dante has harvested 'some good fruit' (alcun buon frutto) from Virgil's lecture.[65]

Notably, Dante's somnolence – a term repeated twice in two lines ('stava com' om che sonnolento vana / Ma questa sonnolenza; 87–88) – occurs after this strenuous intellectual activity, and after a vigil prolonged by Virgil's lectures and by the arrival of the slothful penitents.[66] Dante's sleep is clearly motivated by bodily necessity; this is Peraldus's only valid justification for sleep, which otherwise would be considered a waste of time ('somnus absque necessitate est temporis amissio').[67] The Christian anxiety about the moral dissolution consequent upon sleep, even when following strenuous work, is evident from Peraldus's warnings about the

[64] According to Peraldus, it is essential that a man who wants to proceed in study both deposits in his memory what he has learnt and writes it down (so that his written version will be a 'second memory'): 'Unde ei, qui in studio vellet proficere, summe necessarium esset ut illud, quod addisceret, pro posse suo memoriae infigeret: deinde quia memoria labilis est, scriberet illud et quasi de pergameno aliam sibi memoriam faceret' (Ibid., t. v, pa. 2, ch. 11, p. 202a).

[65] The metaphor of Virgil's speech as 'fruit' may also have its origin in Peraldus's treatise. In opposition to 'otio' (laziness), Peraldus lists the eight fruits of the mouth ('de octo fructibus oris'): Peraldus notes that Jesus Christ, the tree of life, especially desired the seventh, the erudition of one's brother ('eruditio fraterna') – precisely the activity of Virgil in this passage. See Peraldus, 'De octo fructibus oris', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch. 4, p. 179a–81a: 'Septimus fructus est, fraterna eruditio. Fructum istum specialiter ferre volui ipsum lignum vitae, scilicet ipse Filius Dei. Marci 1: "Eamus in civitates et vicos proximos, ut ibi predicem: ad hoc enim veni"'(p. 179b).

[66] The first thing necessary for a person to sleep virtuously, Peraldus states, is that he works when he is awake ('primo necessarium est ei ut vigilando laboret). Peraldus cites Ecclesiastes to the effect that the sleep of a workman is sweet ('Dulcis est somnus operanti'). Peraldus, 'De tribus necessarris homini ut debito modo dormiat', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch. 3, p. 177b.

[67] Peraldus, 'De tribus quae deberent homines cohibere a nemietate somni', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2, ch. 3, pp. 177a–b (p. 177a).

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many evils that may arise during slumber. Peraldus's first three examples all concern a man being murdered or delivered to death by a woman in his sleep (Jael killed Sisara; Dalila delivered Samson to his enemies; Judith murdered Holofernes). In Dante-character's own dream, he is affronted by the Siren, the 'ancient witch' (antica strega), and saved from her clutches only by Virgil's awakening of him (*Purg*. XIX, 34–36). Given Dante's extreme tiredness up to this point, the dream of the Siren (1–15) is clearly not an afterthought at all; rather, it is the narrative climax of Dante-character's 'intellectual drama'.

Virgil's Doctrine and the Dream of the Siren

This reappraisal of the terrace of sloth brings out two narrative dramas: the acute fervour of the penitent slothful and, framing this, Dante-character's intellectual zeal for knowledge. With a ternary structure in mind, we can see that the dream of the Siren (in *Purgatorio* XIX) is the second major stage of Dante's intellectual drama. In so doing, we discover that Virgil's three doctrinal lectures in the first part (XVII, 73–XVIII, 87) – on the moral structure of Purgatory, on the nature of love, and on free will and moral responsibility – are represented symbolically by the dream of the Siren in the second part (XVIII, 130–45 and XIX, 1–69).

Virgil's first lecture (*Purg*. XVII, 91–139) expounds on love and its disorder as the very foundation of the moral structure of Purgatory. Virgil states that the soul's love can be disordered in two main ways: the love of an evil ('per male obietto') or the unmeasured love of a good ('o per troppo o per poco di vigore'). Virgil then categorises pride, envy, and anger as three ways by which we come to love the evil of our neighbour; sloth as the deficient love of God; and avarice, gluttony, and lust as three forms of excessive love for lesser goods. The first triad of vices concerns internal spiritual blindness, which sets man off on the wrong course and leads him to hatred of his neighbour. This internal blindness is corrected on the three corresponding terraces: proud eyes are bent low, envious eyes stitched up, and wrathful eyes plunged into impenetrable darkness ('buio d'inferno'). The second triad of vices concerns disordered attraction of external, sensible things: the avaricious seek to possess all they see; the gluttons are possessed by the taste of foods and drinks; and the lustful constantly seek the touch of sexual pleasure. The Siren arguably embodies this transition from the two triads of vices, from the 'internal' to the 'external', from the 'spiritual' to the 'carnal': she does not just distract man from his true course or entice him to slow his oar (the specific vice

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of sloth), but also seduces him to follow unworthy worldly cares and distractions.[68] In classical illustrations of the Siren, her closed arms may depict avarice; her fish's tail gluttony; and her virginal face lust.[69] Virgil emphasises that the 'antica strega' (the Siren) is the only thing wept for on the three final terraces of the mountain.

Virgil's first lecture leads Dante-character to question him about the nature of love: 'that you expound love for me, to which you refer every good action and its contrary' ('Però ti prego, dolce padre caro, / che mi dimostri amore, a cui reduci / ogne buono operare, e 'l suo contraro'; XVIII, 14–15). Virgil's second scholastic discourse (XVIII, 19–39), appealing directly to Dante's intellect (16–18), is both a constructive explication of 'rational love' ('d'animo') and how it may err, and a refutation of the opposing thesis that 'every love in itself [is] a praiseworthy thing' ('ciascun amore in sé laudabil cosa'; 35–36), 'the error of the blind who claim to lead' ('l'error de' ciechi che si fanno duci'; 18).[70] As a qualification of the courtly love rhetoric of Francesca da Rimini (*Inf.* V), Virgil's discourse situates Dante's views on love as a mean between those of the two Guidos ('l'uno e l'altro Guido') referenced on the terrace of pride (*Purg.* XI, 97–99).[71] For Guido Cavalcanti, love is a passion which ultimately impedes man from the perfect good of philosophical contemplation; in contrast, Guinizelli indiscriminately exalts love as the source of perfection. Dante, however, both defends love as leading man to the highest good (contra Calvalcanti) and shows how particular loves may lead

[68] See, for example, Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 4–9: 'Auctor in persona cuiuslibet se purgantis a vitiis, purgatis quatuor principalibus vitiis spiritualibus et diabolicis, scilicet superbia, invidia, ira et accidia, procedit ad tria alia carnalia vitia, scilicet avaritiam, gulam, et luxuriam. Quae quidem tria vitia, quia magis ab attractione quadam ficta et fallaci mundana, quam a malitia, ut superiora quatuor vitia praenotata, procedunt, ideo hic auctor in principio istorum trium vitiorum, quae inter se fraternizzant, et eorum tractatu, fingit hanc Sirenam se invenire somnio; hoc est, quod contemplatus fuit quid movebat nos ad dicta tria vitia, quod erat dicta attractio, quae decipit nos aut circa avaritiam, aut circa gulam, aut circa luxuriam.'

[69] See Codice cassinese, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, nota: 'quo respectu puto antiquum usum pingendi dictas syrenas habuisse hic. scilicet. eas pingere cum vultu virgineo in quo attractio praedicta luxuriae denotatur. Item cum manibus strictis in quo attractio avaritiae figuratur. Item cum caudis piscium in quo attractio gulae denotatur.' See also Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 19–24: 'Unde et usus modernus pingit eas hodie in unico corpore repraesentantes ista tria vitia. Nam per vultum humanum attractio luxuriae figuratur, per strictionem manuum, avaritiae, per caudas piscium, gulae. Et sic etiam nunc iste auctor fingit has tres Sirenas, idest attractiones, in unico corpore istius feminae balbutientis; in quo balbutiatu denotat affectionem gulae, in obliquitate oculorum, luxuriae, in impedimento manuum et pedum, avaritia.'

[70] See Mathew 15:14: 'Caeci sunt, et duces caecorum.'

[71] Virgil's exposition recasts passages from the *Convivio* (see especially *Conv.* I, xi, 4–5 and IV, vi, 13–16).

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to evil as well as to good (contra Guinizelli). Dante-character presents himself as being corrected, then, of this counter-thesis.[72]

Virgil first explains the basic psychology of love to Dante. The underlying premise is that, created by God, the human soul is naturally disposed to love (XVIII, 19). The mind's first movement passes through two stages: first the mind is stimulated ('awakened into act') by the pleasure given by the perception of a desirable object (21), and then it naturally inclines towards this object (20). In more scholastic terminology (22–24), the power of perception ('vostra apprensiva') presents the image ('intenzione') of an external object to the mind; if the object is pleasure-giving, the mind naturally inclines towards it ('sì che l'animo ad essa volger face'). Where the first movement is a natural inclination (a 'turning'), Virgil here reserves the term 'love' to specify a second 'spiritual movement' ('moto spiritale'), the bending ('piegar') of the mind towards this object: 'if, having turned [first movement], the mind bends towards it [second movement], that bending is love' ('e se rivolto inver' di lei si piega / quell piegare è amor'; 25–26). As the captured mind enters into desire ('l'animo preso entra in disire'; 31), it cannot rest until it possesses the desired object. In this way, Virgil refutes the thesis that 'every love is itself a praiseworthy thing'. Although the natural disposition to love (the wax) is always good, the mind may choose to bend towards a pleasure-giving object (a seal), which, for an individual, may be an apparent but not an actual good.[73]

Dante's dream of the Siren, in its first phase (*Purg.* XIX, 1–24), enacts the way in which the mind may bend in love towards this kind of delectable but ultimately false object. Indeed, the string of five adjectival phrases describing the Siren embodies the five kinds of false earthly happiness delineated by Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*:

> Mi venne in sogno una femmina balba,
> ne li occhi guercia e sovra i piè distorta,
> con le man monche, e di colore scialba.
> (*Purg.* XIX, 7–9)
>
> [There came to me in a dream a female stuttering,
> cross-eyed, and crooked on her feet, with stunted
> hands, and pallid in colour].

[72] For this summary, see also Guiseppe Giacalone, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 16–18.

[73] Benvenuto glosses this process with the example of a man seeing a picture of a beautiful woman. First, the form of the beautiful woman ('through the windows of the eyes') enters into his mind, giving pleasure; then, the mind may choose to bend in love towards this woman (even if absent or never seen in person before). Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XVIII, 19–21.

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On this interpretation, 'balba' (stuttering) indicates the vanity of fame or human glory (*gloria*) which exists on the stuttering tongues of men; 'ne li occhi guercia' [cross-eyed] denotes the imperfection of honours (*dignitates*) which stand before men's eyes; 'sovra i piè distorta' [crooked on her feet] indicates that men walk unsafely and unstably on riches (*divitiae*); 'le man monche' [the stunted hands] represent the imperfection of the works committed through temporal authority over lands (*regna*); and 'di colore scialba' [pallid colour] represents the vanity of sensual pleasures (*voluptates*) which rest only in appearance (as colour is only an accidental property of a substance).[74] That Dante is the object of the main clause ('mi venne') reflects that the Siren, as yet an unnamed subject 'una femmina' [female], is presented to him, initially, as she is.

In the next terzina, by contrast, the subject–object relationship is inverted:

> Io la mirava; e come 'l sol conforta
> le fredde membra che la notte aggrava,
> così lo sguardo mio le facea scorta
> la lingua, e poscia tutta la drizzava
> in poco d'ora, e lo smarrito volto,
> com' amor vuol, così le colorava.
> (*Purg.* XIX, 10–15)

> [I was gazing at her; and, as the sun strengthens
> cold limbs that the night weighs down, so my gaze loosed
> her tongue, and then in a short while it straightened her
> entirely and gave colour to her wan face, just as love desires].

As Dante, the subject, actively gazes on her, the Siren is transformed: his gaze, like the sun warming cold limbs, gives colour to her face, loosens her tongue, and straightens her distorted features. Through Dante's gaze and seconded by the movement of love ('com' amor vuol'), the 'femina balba'

[74] For this reading, see, for example, Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 1–15. According to this interpretation, Dante's Siren portrays the false view of human happiness which Boethius associates with Epicurus. See Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, III, ii, 47–52, in *The Theological Tractates*, ed. and trans. by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 234–35: 'Habes igitur ante oculos propositam fere formam felicitatis humanae – opes, honores, potentiam, gloriam, voluptates. Quae quidem sola considerans Epicurus consequenter sibi summum bonum voluptatem esse constituit, quod cetera omnia iucunditatem animo videantur afferre' [So now you have as it were set before your eyes the delineaments of human happiness: wealth, honour, power, glory, pleasure. Epicurus looked only at these things, and consequently decided that for him the highest good was pleasure, since all the others seemed to bring delight to the mind]. See also Olivia Holmes, 'Wisdom and Folly; Lady Philosophy and the Sirens', in Holmes, *Dante's Two Beloveds*, pp. 35–67; and G. Mezzadroli, 'Dante, Boezio e le sirene', *Lingua e Stile*, 25: 1 (1990), 25–56.

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(a stuttering, ugly, pallid, female) is transformed into the 'dolce serena' (the sweet, blushing, rosy Siren). This sequence may reflect how the five kinds of false earthly happiness represented by the 'femina' come to appear delectable because of man's false estimation: men believe, mistakenly, that fleeting glory (*gloria*) will not stutter, but bring lasting renown (*celebritas*); honours, not imperfect, will bring reverence (*reverentia*); wealth (*divitiae*) will bring not danger, but rather the security of sufficiency (*sufficientia*); lands (*regna*) will bring not the frustration of governance in inefficiency, compromise, and corruption, but rather true authority and power (*potentia*); and pleasures (*voluptates*) will produce not vanity and emptiness, but joy (*laetitia*).[75] The Siren so captivates men that any drawn to her rarely leave ('e qual meco s'ausa / rado sen parte'; 23–24); at an allegorical level, whoever falls in love with imperfect worldly goods becomes enchanted by, or habituated to, them. The transformation of the 'femina balba' into the 'dolce serena', thereby renders poetically Virgil's second doctrinal discourse on the nature of love, and how a person may love an ultimately false good (*Purg.* XVIII, 19–39).

Virgil's third discourse (XVIII, 46–74) is rendered poetically, then, in the second stage of the Siren episode (XIX, 25–33). This doctrinal lecture responds to Dante's question that, if love comes from outside the soul ('s'amore è di fuori a noi offerto'; XVIII, 43), and the soul follows only this attraction ('e l'anima non va con altro piede'; 44), how is the soul to blame for following good or evil? ('se dritta o torta va non è suo merto'; 45). Virgil clarifies that our first appetites are determined (just as a bee is made to make honey) and, therefore, this first desire deserves neither praise nor blame ('e questa prima voglia / merto di lode o di biasmo non cape'; 59–60) – a doctrine reiterating the central discourse on love in *Purgatorio* XVII ('Lo naturale è sempre sanza errore'; 94). Nevertheless, Virgil again emphasises that, aside from these natural desires, man has reason which counsels, giving or withholding assent to the desire ('la virtù che consiglia / e de l'assenso de' tener la soglia'; 62–63). Finally, man has free will ('la nobile virtù . . . lo libero arbitrio'; 73–74) which enables him to act upon what reason counsels. Even, therefore, if all desires arose through necessity ('di necessitate / surga ogne amor'; 70–71), man – with reason

[75] Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, III, ii, 72–77, in *Theological Tractates*, pp. 236–37: 'Atqui haec sunt quae adipisci homines volunt eaque de causa divitias, dignitates, regna, gloriam voluptatesque desiderant, quod per haec sibi sufficientiam, reverentiam, potentiam, celebritatem, laetitiam credunt esse venturam' [These surely are the things men want to gain, for that reason they desire riches, high office, the rule of men, glory, and pleasure, because they believe that through them they will achieve sufficiency, respect, power, celebrity, and joy].

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and free will – has the power and, therefore, the responsibility of moral action. This conclusion also echoes, of course, Marco Lombardo's discourse in *Purgatorio* XVI ('in voi è la cagione'; 83).

Now consider the second phase of the Siren episode. Immediately after Dante is seduced by the Siren's speech, a lady prompts Virgil to rip the Siren's clothes and expose her belly ('il ventre'):

> Ancor non era sua bocca richiusa
> quand' una donna apparve santa e presta
> lunghesso me per far colei confusa.
> 'O Virgilio, Virgilio, chi è questa?'
> fieramente dicea; ed el venìa
> con li occhi fitti pur in quella onesta.
> L'altra prendea, e dinanzi l'apria,
> fendendo i drappi, e mostravami 'l ventre;
> quel mi svegliò col puzzo che n'uscia.
> (*Purg.* XIX, 25–33)

[Her mouth had not yet closed when there appeared a lady, holy and quick, alongside me, to confound her.
'O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?' she was saying fiercely;
and he was approaching with his eyes fixed only on that virtuous one.
The other he seized, and opened in front, tearing her clothes, and showed me her belly, which awakened me with the stench which issued from it].

In light of the parallels with the doctrinal discourse in *Purgatorio* XVIII (which Virgil emphasises is according to reason; 'quanto ragion qui vede / dir ti poss' io'; 46–47) *and* the Boethian echoes in the Siren episode thus far, it does seem natural to identify 'la donna . . . santa e presta' (XIX, 26) as Lady Philosophy.[76] In Dantean allegory, the lady's eyes represent the demonstrations of her science. Here, Lady Philosophy's doctrine (and, perhaps, specifically the text of Boethius's *Consolation*) demonstrates to reason the baseness and trickery of the five false earthly goals represented by the Siren. The lady asks Virgil *who* the Siren is ('chi è questa?'; 28); that

[76] This interpretation is clearly expounded by Francesco da Buti (gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 16–33): 'Questa donna *santa e presta*, ch'apparve allato a Dante e chiama Virgilio, è la Filosofia, che co la dottrina sua all'omo viene subita e muove Virgilio; cioè la ragione, chiamandolo a considerare la viltà e lo inganno de la felicità mondana.' Some early commentators interpret this lady more generally as 'reason' (see, for example, Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 25–33) but, as Buti implies, this duplicates the function of Virgil in the dream allegory. Others identify her more narrowly as 'temperance' (see, for example, Pietro [3], gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 1–45) but, again, this does not seem to reflect the lady's actions in the dream. Various other proposals have emerged as well, especially in the twentieth century, including allegories of 'virtue', 'truth', 'charity', and 'prudence', as well as Mary, Lucy, and Beatrice. I agree with Sapegno (gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 16) that, amongst the modern interpretations, the identification with Lady Philosophy remains the most plausible.

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is, she compels Dante-character to consider intellectually the Siren's essence (her quiddity) and not how she may appear through accidental properties which are subject to change (as the pallid 'femmina balba', through Dante's desire, becomes the blushing 'dolce serena'). Exposed for what she truly is, the Siren vanishes as Dante is awoken from his dream by her foul stench ('col puzzo che n'uscia'; 33).[77]

The dream of the Siren continues to weigh on Dante's mind until Virgil's final rebuke in which he names her not as the 'femmina balba' (as she first appears to Dante in his dream) or the 'dolce serena' (as she presents herself), but rather as the 'antica strega': 'antica' (ancient) because she existed from the beginning of the world, and 'strega' (witch) because she still succeeds in enticing people to follow her temptations. The exasperation of Dante's early commentators, let alone Virgil, on this point is evident: even though wise authorities from antiquity have warned against the false kinds of earthly happiness, people continue to be seduced by the Siren's song.[78] Therefore, when Virgil says 'vedesti come l'uom da lei si slega' [you have seen how one frees oneself from her] (XIX, 60), this may refer *both* to the poetical episode of the Siren in the first half of *Purgatorio* XIX *and* to Virgil's doctrinal passages in *Purgatorio* XVIII.

Looking back retrospectively, it is clear that the Siren was present implicitly throughout the terrace of sloth. The nautical image comparing Dante and Virgil to a beached ship on their arrival at the terrace is reinforced through the two examples of sloth: those Trojan women who burnt Aeneas's ships and chose to remain on Sicily's shores, and the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea but, complaining, hearkened back to life in Egypt (a life of sin).[79] The actual appearance of the Siren in Dante's

[77] Virgil's three calls may be interpreted in different ways. Francesco da Buti interprets them as the three admonishments of reason to sensuality: the first calls with the voice of memory, demanding man to remember his principle and goal (God); the second calls with the voice of the intellect, telling him to understand what a man is (i.e., by his definition, or quiddity, as a rational animal); and the third calls with the voice of direct will, demanding that man love and desire the first and true perfect good (God). See Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 34–51.

[78] See, for example, Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 16–33: 'e niente di meno li omini mondani pur la seguitano, e da lei non si sanno partire'; and Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 58–63: 'idest, inveteratam meretricem, quae ab initio mundi seduxit hominem'.

[79] See Craig Boyd and Kevin Timpe, *Sloth: Some Historical Reflections on Laziness, Effort, and Resistance to the Demands of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 5: 'One Scriptural portrait of sloth is the Israelite nation facing the Promised Land. As slothful, they can't bring themselves fully to accept what their identity as God's own people entails, and so they hang back from the rest and fulfilment promised "in the land your God has given you." The land is already theirs according to God's promise, but must yet be seized by further work and battle. When they see the challenges ahead, they too quickly revert back to the comfortably familiar discomforts of their desert

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dream, therefore, simply makes explicit her powerful presence in, or even influence over, the terrace of sloth as a whole.

Sloth As Dante's First Sin in *Inferno* I

If we consider that Virgil's three doctrinal lectures in the terrace of sloth embody, for Dante, the very structure of the Christian moral life in terms of ordered and disordered love, this may suggest – beyond the terrace itself – a heightened autobiographical and poetical significance for the vice of sloth. Could sloth, in fact, be the very first sin of Dante-character on his moral journey?[80] This is not to suggest another symbolic interpretation of the leopard, the lion, and the she-wolf. Rather, even before he encounters the three beasts, Dante-character had attempted (and failed) to leave the wooded valley behind him and to ascend the high mountain of virtue.[81] What sin caused, then, this failure?

> Ma poi ch'i' fui al piè d'un colle giunto
> . . . guardai in alto . . .
> Poi ch'èi posato un poco il corpo lasso,
> ripresi via per la piaggia diserta
> sì che 'l piè fermo era 'l più basso.
> (*Inf.* I, 13–30)
>
> [But when I had reached the foot of a hill . . .
> I looked on high . . .
> After I had a little rested my weary body, I took my way again
> along the deserted slope, so that my halted foot was always the lower].

On the terrace of sloth, Virgil upbraids Dante, informing him that the soul walks not only by love, but also 'with the other foot' ('con altro piede') of the intellect (*Purg.* XVIII, 44).[82] The stationary foot ('l piè fermo';

wandering, preferring them to a chance at real rest, a chance that comes with a challenge to live fully into their identity as God's chosen people.'

[80] See Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 134.

[81] Dante supplements the metaphor of moral pilgrimage, in which the wood of sin traversed is described as dark (oscura), savage (selvagia), harsh (aspra), and fierce (forte), with the metaphor of life as a sea-journey. He describes himself as one who, having just arrived on land, looks back on the perilous waters ('l'acqua perigliosa'; *Inf.* I, 24) of sin. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* I, 28–30: 'Et adverte quod autor tangit morem et actum itinerantis viatoris, qui percursa longa et aspera valle, ascensurus montem altissimum, quiescit paululum ad pedes montis, et post quietem iterum incipit itinerare. Ita autor noster, tamquam viator cum diu errasset per sylvam viciorum, volens ascendere montem altissimum virtutis, parum quievit, deinde coepit ascendere.'

[82] Cassell emphasises that for centuries 'critics and commentators failed to consider the line [30] in the context of the traditional metaphoric use of the word foot . . . in philosophy and patristics'. See

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Inf. 1, 30), then, is the *pes affectus*. At the beginning of his ascent up the mountain, Dante-character's love is deficient, holding him back from pursuing the upwards path of holiness directed by his intellect (the *pes intellectus*).[83] Dante exhibits, in other words, the vice of tepidity, the 'love of the good' that falls 'short of its proper duty'.

More precisely, we may identify Dante's first sin as the sub-species 'ignavia', the slothful vice of the person who chooses to remain in great misery rather than to undertake the work necessary to escape it.[84] Peraldus's description of the 'ignavi' captures, in my view, Dante's exact moral predicament at this early stage in his journey:

> Postquam ipse posuit unum pedem, scilicet intellectus vel boni propositi, in via munditiae, alium tamen pedem, scilicet affectus vel operis, differt movere per duos annos vel amplius, remanens in immunditia ex pigritia removendi pedem illum. Multi enim sunt qui postquam iudicaverunt bonum esse inchoare novam vitam, et proposuerunt vel voverunt se ingressuros religionem, tamen differunt multis annis implere illud.[85]
>
> [After he has placed one foot, that is of his intellect or good intention, in the path of holiness, his other foot, of his affection or action, he delays moving off for two years or even more, remaining in vice from the sloth of moving that foot. There are indeed many who, having decided that it would be good to start a new life, and proposed or vowed to enter religion, nonetheless delay for many years from actually doing so].

It is only after this failure, therefore, that Dante-character is assailed by the other vices (the 'three beasts'), turning back to the 'dark wood' or 'perilous sea' of sin. As Peraldus notes, the 'ignavi' choose their own death (the 'sea of Hell') through the waters of riches and other snares, rather than

Cassell, *Inferno* 1, pp. 34–44 (pp. 34–35). However, although Cassell provides a useful summary of the scholarly crux (see also p. 150, n. 51), he does not make the connection with its use (and interpretation) in the terrace of sloth, nor does he examine the context in Peraldus. In consequence, he misidentifies Dante's sin here as pride: 'In the metaphors of the Church, the "foot of pride" has come to the wayfarer and he falls' (p. 40).

[83] Wenzel follows John Freccero, who in turn follows the early commentators on this passage. See Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth*, p. 134: 'what hinders Dante from ascending even before the appearance of the beasts is his spiritual lameness', the 'discord between *pes intellectus* and *pes affectus*'. Wenzel concludes that, in this way, Dante expresses the 'psychological reality that man's soul, when captured by sin and incapable of rising before it gains true insight into sin, passes from *acedia* to avarice and the other sins of the flesh'.

[84] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 12, p. 202b: 'Hoc vitio laborat ille, qui potius eligit in miseria magna permanere, quam aliquantulum laboris sustinere.'

[85] Ibid., t. v, pa. 2 ch. 12, p. 203a. Peraldus emphasises not just the metaphor of the *pedes intellectus* and *pedes affectus*, therefore, but the vision of the religious life as a 'new life' (vita nova).

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journeying to the door of life through 'the dry earth of poverty' – imagery directly picked up by Dante in his poetic treatment.[86]

What remedy, then, is there for those in Dante-character's predicament? Peraldus's second and third remedies against sloth are the consideration of future pain (*consideratio poenae futurae*) and of eternal reward (*consideratio aeternae praemii*). He tells an anecdote from the *Life of the Desert Fathers* in which the abbot counsels both these remedies to a monk struggling with sloth:

> Secundum et tertium similiter habemus in *vitis Patrum*: ubi dicitur quod quidam frater interrogavit Abbatem Achillem, dicens: 'Cur sedens in cella mea patior acediam?' Cui senex: 'Quia nondum vidisti requiem quam speramus, neque tormenta quae timemus. Si enim ea inspiceres diligenter, etsi vermibus plena esset cella tua usque ad collum, etiam in ipsis permaneres sine acedia iacens.'[87]
>
> [We have both the second and third remedies in the *Lives of the Fathers*, in which it is said that a certain brother questioned the abbot Achilles, saying: 'Why do I give in to sloth in my cell?' To whom the wise man responded: 'Because you have not yet seen the peace that we hope for or the torments that we fear. If you were to contemplate them diligently, even if your cell was full of worms up to your throat, you would remain in them laying prostrate in your cell without, nonetheless, sloth'].

In response to Dante's cry for help, Virgil first upbraids him for not climbing the mountain, as he should:

> Ma tu perché ritorni a tanta noia?
> perché non sali il dilettoso monte
> ch' è principio e cagion di tutta gioia?
> (*Inf.* I, 76–78)

[But why do you turn back to such grief and harm? Why don't you climb the delightful hill, the cause and origin of all joy?]

Virgil then presents precisely the abbot's remedy: he shows Dante the desperate cries ('le disperate strida') of the damned, those content in the fire of Purgatory, and the blessed people ('le beate genti') in heaven (*Inf.* I, 115–20).

The retellings of the opening scene through the eyes of Virgil, Beatrice, and Lucia in *Inferno* II reinforce this interpretation. Appealing

[86] Ibid., t. v, pa. 2 ch. 12, p. 203a: 'potius eligit per aquam divitiarum et deliciarum ire ad mortem suam quam aliquantulum laborando per terram siccam paupertatis, ad portum pervenire vitae. Divitiae deliciaeque aquae sunt tendentes ad mare inferni.'

[87] Ibid., t. v, pa. 3, p. 208a.

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to Beatrice, Lucia says that Dante loved her so much that he left the vulgar herd ('t'amò tanto / c'uscì te de la volgare schiera'; *Inf.* II, 104–5), which Guido da Pisa glosses as the wise man abandoning the study of secular sciences and turning, instead, to sacred theology that leads to beatitude:

> Desiring to gain beatitude, the wise man abandons the study of secular sciences and turns, instead, to the study of sacred theology. Therefore it says: 'who has left the vulgar herd for you', that is for your love he has set aside the liberal arts and philosophy and other sciences, which are called 'vulgar' because they obtain the fame and the glory of the people ['vulgi']. Indeed, only philosophers, doctors, and judges are honoured by the people, and, because they have the people's fame, they obtain the glory of the world, that is, money. The science of sacred theology neither seeks the world's glory nor tries to empty the pockets of one's neighbours. The wise man only seeks that in which is everything that can satisfy the human appetite; everything else, indeed, leads rather to famine than to satiety.[88]

Dante's spiritual model, of course, is St Augustine, whose desire for God ultimately surpassed all other desires, whether in his early sensual life, or in his study of 'worldly' rhetoric and philosophy.[89] In a vivid description of the procrastination, delaying, and back-sliding characteristic of sloth, Virgil suggests it was 'viltade' [pusillanimity] (45) or 'tema' [fear] (49) that turned Dante – marred by 'other thoughts' (37–42) – from his 'honourable undertaking', leading him to see a 'beast' where there was only a shadow (40). This is why, returning to the 'lost road' of holiness

[88] Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* II, 105: 'Amore adipiscendae beatitudinis homo sapiens de scientiis secularibus exit et studio sacrae theologiae intendit. Unde dicit: qui exiit propter te de vulgari acie, idest propter amorem tuum scientias liberales omisit, et philosophiam et alias scientias universas, quae ideo vulgares dicuntur, quia vulgi famam et gloriam consequuntur. Non enim reputantur in vulgo nisi qui vel philosophi vel medici fuerint, aut iudices. Et ideo tales, quia vulgi famam habent, mundi gloriam, idest pecuniam, apprehendunt. Scientia vero sacrae theologiae nec mundi gloriam quaerit, nec marsupia proximorum vacuare intendit. Solum enim quaerit illum in quo sunt omnia quae possunt satiare hominis appetitum; cetera vero, praeter ipsam famem, potius quam satietatem inducunt.'

[89] Ibid. 'Et hoc considerans, Augustinus aiebat: Si Deus universa quae habet michi daret, non me satiaret nisi se ipsum dare promitteret. Et idem: Inquietum est cor nostrum donec in te requiescat. Et ideo bene dicit Ieronimus: Vana est omnis scientia in qua non quaeritur Christus' [And contemplating this, Augustine said: 'If God were to give me everything that he has, it would not satisfy me unless he promised me to give me Himself.' And elsewhere, 'my heart is restless until it rests in you'. And therefore St Jerome's words are well said: 'All knowledge is vain in which is not sought Christ']. Pietro Alighieri cites the passage from Augustine in which he refers to his adolescent eyesight as 'silvester' and his loves as 'umbrosis', which creates suggestive parallels with Dante's reflection on his earlier life in sin (Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 40–139).

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(the *via munditiae*) at the shore of Purgatory, all other journeying seems to Dante in vain.[90]

It is notable, in this respect, that the first groups of souls in Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise dramatize, in different ways, this laggardness towards the religious life. The 'wretched souls' of *Inferno* III who live 'without praise or blame' allude to the Biblical *topos* (Revelation 3. 15–16) of those who are 'neither cold nor hot', and whom Christ will therefore 'vomit out of my mouth'. Peraldus – as we have seen – directly associates this passage with tepidity: 'tepidity is the only sin that provokes God to vomit'.[91] The unnamed cleric, Pope Celestine V, by abdicating, failed in the most dramatic way to follow his call from God to lead the faithful in the religious life. Dante's original realm of Ante-Purgatory is peopled by those who delayed the religious life of penance; as a punishment for delaying, they must wait for the purifying fire (the *poena corrigens*) of Purgatory. The two souls we encounter in the slowest sphere of the Moon were contemplative sisters (of the order of St Clare) who, upon being forcibly removed from their cloister, failed to insist (even unto martyrdom) on their religious vocation, instead assenting (albeit against their desire) to a worldly life. In Dante's moral vision, the fourth terrace of sloth is halfway between God (in the Empyrean) and Satan (in the depths of Hell): the sin of sloth is arguably the nexus, then, between the call to 'belong to God' and to 'belong to the world' (1 John 4).

The Sloth of Statius, Dante's Autobiographical Cypher

Given these moral and meta-poetic levels, it is striking that Dante delineates 'sloth' as, alongside prodigality, the dominant sin of his autobiographical cypher, the poet-scholar Statius:[92]

> E pria ch'io conducessi i Greci a' fiumi
> di Tebe poetando, ebb' io battesmo;
> ma per paura chiuso cristian fu' mi,

[90] Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* I, 28–30: 'in Purgatorio sigillatim lavabit et mundabit se ab omnibus peccatis'.

[91] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 1, ch. 3, p. 168a: 'De hac tepiditate dicit Hieronymus. "Tepiditas sola est, quae solet Deo vomitum provocare."' See also t. v, pa. 2, ch. 1, p. 175a.

[92] Dorigatti draws attention to this parallel. However, without the context of Peraldus for Dante's treatment, he does not identify tepidity as the quiddity of the genus of sloth (see Dorigatti, 'The Acid Test of Faith', pp. 169–75); rather, he turns – mistakenly, in my view –, to 'the Thomistic sense which Dante knew all too well' (p. 175).

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lungamente mostrando paganesmo;
e questa tepidezza il quarto cerchio
cerchiar mi fé più che 'l quarto centesmo'.
(*Purg.* XXII, 88–93)

[And before I led the Greeks to the rivers of Thebes in my poetry, I was baptized; but out of fear I was a secret Christian,
for a long time feigning paganism; and this tepidity had me circling the fourth circle beyond a fourth century].

Statius did 500 years in Purgatory for prodigality (XXI, 68) and 400 years for sloth (XXII, 92), leaving a little more than 300 years for his stints in Ante-Purgatory and the terraces of pride, envy, and wrath combined (Statius died in 96 AD, and the date of the poem is 1300). Dante presents Statius as passing through *two* conversions. The first is moral: a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid* showed Statius the error of his prodigal ways (XXII, 37–54). The second is *spiritual*: Virgil's prophetic fourth *Eclogue*, resonating with the 'new preachers' of the gospel, converted him from paganism to Christianity.[93] Crucially, prodigality was Statius's dominant sin when he was still a pagan, whereas 'sloth' was his dominant sin after his second conversion to Christianity. Sloth is, therefore, *the* sin of Statius *as a Christian*.

What was the consequence of sloth for the poet-scholar Statius? And why might this be particularly relevant to Dante? Statius's tepidity (he was a 'closed Christian') suggests that an implied Christian sense must be read out of Statius's otherwise 'closed' *Thebaid*. Thus, in a medieval allegorical interpretation, the seven assailants who enter the gates of Thebes may represent the seven deadly sins who enter the seven apertures of humanity, while the compassionate intervention of Theseus in establishing the altar of mercy may foreshadow the saving work of Christ.[94] Dante, in turn,

[93] Dante's reading of Statius's *Thebaid* as, in some way, indicating that Statius had converted to Christianity is a vexed *questio* in the scholarship. For a survey of the passages of the *Thebaid* which critics have delineated as prompting Dante's interpretation, see Scevola Mariotti, 'Il cristianesimo di Stazio in Dante secondo il Poliziano', in *Letteratura e critica: Studi in onore di N. Sapegno*, vol. 2, (Rome: Bulzoni, 1975), pp. 149–61. See also Ettore Paratore, 'Stazio', in *ED,* V, pp. 419–25 (pp. 423–24).

[94] See Giorgio Padoan, 'Teseo "figura Redemptoris" e il cristianesimo di Statio', in *Il pio Enea, l'empio Ulisse: Tradizione classica e intendimento medievale in Dante* (Ravenna: Longo, 1977), pp. 125–50; see also Giorgio Padoan, 'Il canto XXI del *Purgatorio*', in *Nuove letture dantesche*, vol. 4 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1970), pp. 327–54 (pp. 349–50). Padoan argues that Dante reads the *Thebaid* in relation to the commentary by pseudo-Fulgentius. Padoan's view is developed by Marco Ariani, who argues that Dante interprets the 'cognitio secretorum' implicit in the poetry of Virgil and Statius. See Marco Ariani, 'La dolce sapienza di Stazio: *Purgatorio* XXI–XXII', in Quadrio (ed.), *Esperimenti Danteschi: Purgatorio 2009*, pp. 197–224 (see especially pp. 214–16). Peter Heslin argues that Dante

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must surpass the model of Statius, and make God the explicit goal of his moral life and his poetry: his own Christian faith should not be veiled as in the *Vita Nova* but explicit as in the *Commedia*. But there is also a more pressing warning for Statius's fellow scholar-poet, as is evident from Statius' own self-presentation:

> Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma;
> cantai di Tebe e poi del grande Achille,
> ma caddi in via con la seconda soma.
> (*Purg.* XXI, 91–93)
>
> [Statius people back there call me still: I sang of Thebes and then of the great Achilles, but I fell along the way while carrying the second burden].

The insinuation, passed over in the scholarship, is that Statius left his second major work the *Achilleid* incomplete due to his *sloth* (and not simply due to his death).[95] The poet Statius, as Dante knew well, liked to play on the meaning (and puns) of proper names: here, the circumlocution 'Statius people back there call me still' is, as with the famous case of Ciacco, a nod to the *nomen significans rei* [the name signifies the thing]: Statius is a delayer, one who stayed (from the Latin *status*).[96] Statius, therefore, failed to complete the journey of his second poem 'fino a la fine' (the slothful vice of *inconsummatio*); he failed to carry the 'burden' of his poem (*imperseverantia*). In consequence, a part of his potential glory is taken away. That Statius is a cypher for Dante is undisputed, so clear are the autobiographical parallels.[97] It is surely no

constructs a Christological reading of Statius, but downplays the relevance of these medieval allegorical readings for Dante's treatment, and dismisses as 'unfounded' claims that Dante must have known the pseudo-Fulgentius. See Peter Heslin, 'Statius in Dante's *Commedia*', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by W. J. Dominik, C. E. Newlands, and K. Gervais (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 512–26 (pp. 512–13).

[95] See Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* XXI, 93: 'Et quod dicit, quod cecidit in via cum secunda salma, idest, defecit in morte antequam compleret librum Achilleidos, quem incoepit nec complevit.' See also Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XXI, 76–102: '*caddi co la seconda soma*; cioè co la seconda opera, *in via*; cioè nel viaggio, che nolla potè riducere al suo fine'; and Alessandro Vellutello, gloss to Purg. XXI, 91–93: 'Scrisse adunque Statio la *Thebaide*, poi l'*Achilleide*, ma questa, prevenuto da la morte, non produsse al fine, Onde dice esser *con la seconda soma* caduto *in via*.'

[96] See Durling and Martinez, *Purgatorio*, p. 359.

[97] Even at a structural level, Statius's identification of his sloth on the terrace of avarice parallels Dante-character's identification of his pride on the terrace of envy (*Purg.* XIII, 133–38).

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accident that Dante – at the halfway mark of *Purgatorio* and the *Commedia* as a whole – should draw attention to his own battle against the vice of sloth – a battle necessary for him to carry, unlike Statius, his own burden (the 'ponderoso tema'; *Par.* XXIII, 64; *DVE* II, 4) to completion.[98]

As an early illustration of Peraldus's treatise suggests, the virtuous life may be envisaged and framed, first of all, as a lifelong battle against the vices.[99] In the terrace of sloth, Dante represents his own pursuit of wisdom as in continual conflict with the dragging pull of sloth. Moreover, the very beginning of his afterlife journey (and his poetic masterpiece) is driven by a remedy against tepidity (and its offshoots of ignavia and pusillanimity). Dante's extraordinary achievements – as a poet, statesman, philosopher, and theologian – do not undermine the importance of sloth in his life (and in his Christian moral vision as a whole), but rather enforce and provide evidence for it. As a contemplative poet-scholar especially, Dante's life was a heroic battle with the vice of sloth, a battle in which – at least in relation to the *Commedia* – he was victorious, completing his *magnum opus* shortly before his own death in 1321.

[98] Johannis de Serravalle draws out this meta-poetic significance, in commenting on Dante-character's exclamation: 'O virtù mia, perché si ti dilegue?' [O my strength, why do you dissolve so?] (*Purg.* XVII, 73): 'O virtus mea, quare sic fugis a me? idest quare deficis, vel debilitaris? infra meipsum dicebam, quia sentiebam potentiam crurium positam in treugis; hoc est, iam non poteram plus ire; quia in tantum factus est auctor debilis, quod plus ire non poterat … Est credendum quod aliquando intellectus auctoris erat fessus; quia semper insistere operi et laborare, nimis durum est. Tamen ipse auctor, confortans semetipsum, hortabatur: Labora, excitare te; quia homo ad laborem nascitur, et avis ad volandum' (Johannis de Serravalle, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 73–75).

[99] See Harlaian MS. 3244, ff. 27v–28, British Library. The illustration to Peraldus's *Summa* depicts a knight preparing to do battle with the seven deadly sins. Above the illustration is the citation from Job 7:1: 'militia est vita hominis super terram' [military service is the life of man on Earth]. For a helpful discussion of this illustration in relation to Peraldus's *Summa*, see Michael Evans, 'An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's *Summa* of Vice: Harleian MS 3244', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45 (1982), 14–68.

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CHAPTER 7

The Terrace of Avarice, and the Love of Children

Modern critics have been reluctant to contemplate the possibility that Dante might have represented himself as guilty of avarice, even though the early commentators held no such qualms.[1] After all, some of the most sustained invectives of the *Commedia* are against avarice, and, in his prose works, avarice is the great enemy of individual nobility and of society. But, as with *acedia*, we should not equate the strength of Dante's attack against a vice with the weakness of its hold on himself. Moreover, we should emphasise that sinning in avarice does not imply any legal wrongdoing such as the barratry, or corruption, of which Dante was unjustly accused. Given the breadth of medieval understandings of avarice – including a love of power as well as of wealth, and its opposing vice of prodigality – it would be impossible for any Christian, even in a better-governed world,

[1] Both the identification of the she-wolf of *Inferno* 1 as avarice and the autobiographical dimension are brought out strongly by the early commentators. See, for example, Jacopo Alighieri, gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49–54: 'Il terzo avarizia, formata in lupa, a significazione di sua bramosa e infinita voglia'; Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49: 'Tertio et fortius dicit se fuisse impeditum a quadam *bramosissima lupa,* idest ab avaritiae cupiditate'; Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49: 'Tertio fingit auctor vehementius ibi se impeditum a vitio avaritiae in forma lupae sibi occurrente, ut idem Boetius ibidem fingat hoc vitium ut insatiabile quid, in tantum, ut dicit textus, quod iterum ad statum infimum vitiosum mundanum recadebat ipse auctor'; Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49–51: 'Non solum illa leonina effigies, quae superbiam prefigurat, me a bono proposito revocabat, sed etiam una lupa, quae propter sui ingluviem avaritiam praeostendit, tantum michi gravedinis irrogavit, quod ego perdidi spem ad celestia ascendendi'; L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49–51: 'Onde dice l'auctore che elli fue di questo miserissimo vitio sì gravato che quasi desperoe del salire per la via de veritade e di vita. Avaritia è una infermitade de l'animo nata da cupidigia d'a[c]quistare o vero di ritenere ricchezze'; Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.* 1, 49–54: 'Insuper dicit ipse auctor quod ex hoc miserimo vitio tantis fuerit curis et anxietatibus oneratus in monte, quod de ascensu ad viam veritatis et vitae quodamodo desperavit.' Of modern scholars, Barnes is typical in eliminating 'the misuse of wealth, comprising both avarice and prodigality' as one of Dante's sins: 'Although Dante does show a great deal of interest in other people's avarice, he never gives rise to the slightest suspicion that he might himself be guilty of either misuse of wealth – even though in his *Convivio* (1, ix, 2–5) he says that 99.9% of educated Italians are avaricious in that they acquire their education with the purpose of profiting from it' (Barnes, 'Deadly Sins', in Barnes and O'Connell, *Dante*, p. 324).

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not to fall subject to it to some extent. Reflecting on himself at the height of his political power as one of the six priors of Florence in 1300, it is highly plausible that Dante might have acknowledged that, alongside having failed to enter fully the 'new life' of Christian penitence, he had also become seduced by the 'perilous sea' of wealth and power.

We should remember the venerable Christian adage that just as demons are fallen angels, so saints are converted sinners. Indeed, the greatest saint of Dante's age, St Francis (canonised in 1228), was a prodigal prior to his conversion.[2] On climbing to the sixth terrace of gluttony, Dante-character recognises how much lighter he is after the sin of avarice has been erased: 'E io più lieve che per l'altre foci / m'andava' [And I walked lighter than after the other outlets] (*Purg.* XXII, 7–8).[3] The obvious way to interpret this, as Benvenuto's gloss registers, is that Dante-character is acknowledging that he has been purged of a heavy sin (*gravissimum pondus*), while the next two sins – namely, gluttony and lust – are much lighter (he did not much sin in gluttony and lust), an implication which modern commentators appear to have ignored.[4] In this chapter, I argue that both the early commentators (in identifying avarice as Dante's sin in *Inferno* I) *and* the modern commentators (in eschewing such a connection) are right and wrong in different respects: the poet does imply that Dante-character, overthrown by the she-wolf, was guilty of avarice but, as we learn subsequently through Statius, he was guilty of its subspecies, and extreme opposing vice, of prodigality.

This chapter demonstrates, therefore, the significance of avarice in Dante's Christian ethics and in his own moral autobiography. Using Peraldus as a gloss, I draw out the spiritual dimension of Hugh Capet's speech, a speech typically read as political polemic. I suggest, by contrast, that Hugh is atoning in the afterlife for the particular nature of his sin (arguably the original sin of the Capetian line) in the occasion of *amor filiorum* [the love of children]. I argue that love of one's children, and its

[2] See, for example, 'The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano (1228–29)', in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. by Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1999), III, pp. 180–408 (pp. 182–84).

[3] Francesco da Buti similarly connects Dante's acknowledgement of the sin of avarice here with the she-wolf that overthrows him in *Inferno* I: '*et io*; cioè Dante, *più lieve che per l'altre foci*; cioè più leggieri diventato, che per l'altre montate de' gironi; imperò che era purgato del peccato de l'avarizio lo quale li avea dato molto di gravessa, come appare nel primo canto de la prima cantica, quando dice: *Et una lupa*' (see Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XXII, 1–9).

[4] Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXII, 7–9: 'Et subdit effectum suae purgationis, dicens: et io più lieve che per l'altre foci, idest, alios circulos, et merito, quia deposuerat quinque gravissima pondera a capite suo, et restabant sibi duo leviora.'

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negative potential as an occasion to avarice, is an interpretative key to *Purgatorio* XX as a whole, which is structured around Hugh's confession at its centre (*Purg*. XX, 40–96). The innermost frame of the examples of poverty (16–33) and avarice (97–123) all concern the impact of poverty on family dependents. The further frame of the she-wolf (4–15) and the poor shepherds (124–41) highlights how Christ's contemporary pastors fail to protect His flock from avarice. The prologue (1–3) and epilogue (142–51) concern the extension of avarice to truth: the cupidinous desire for knowledge. For Dante, as for Peraldus, two opposing vices spring from the disordered love for wealth and power: avarice and prodigality. In the chiastic structure of the terrace as a whole, Hugh Capet (and *Purgatorio* XX) is framed by the figures of Pope Adrian V (*Purgatorio* XIX), an exemplar of avarice, and Statius (*Purgatorio* XXI–XXII), an exemplar of prodigality. I suggest that Dante sets up his own 'father-role' as a Christian poet within the genealogy of ethical poets, in contrast to the genealogy of popes and the genealogy of ancestral line highlighted by Pope Adrian V and Hugh Capet, respectively. In the fourth part, I argue that Statius is a poetic cypher for Dante in relation to the sin of prodigality as well as to the sin of sloth.

Hugh Capet and *Amor filiorum* (*Purg*. XX, 43–96)

In one sense, Hugh Capet is a vehicle for Dante's extremely partisan, and in places wildly inaccurate, view of the role of France in medieval European history. The canto (*Purgatorio* XX) and wider episode of which Hugh Capet is a central figure (the terrace of Avarice) are undoubtedly, at one level, political propaganda on Dante's part: the polemical message, in a nutshell, is that the greed of the French kings has destroyed the peace and balance of power, which only a universal emperor might justly enforce. What better spokesperson and other-worldly authority for such a biased, anti-French view of history than the very progenitor of the line of French kings from 987 to the time of Dante? It may seem cruel that Dante makes Hugh Capet call his father 'a butcher' – an impious insult and complete slander: his father was Hugh the Great, the duke of the French (*dux Francorum*), who for many years had been the power behind the French throne.[5] It may seem entirely inappropriate, moreover, that Hugh Capet

[5] See, for example, Georges Duby's admittedly Francophile *France in the Middle Ages 987–1460: From Hugh Capet to Joan of Arc*, trans. by Juliet Vale (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), which nonetheless provides a helpful, and more accurate, counterpart to Dante's presentation. See especially pp. 13–30:

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should be forced utterly to condemn his own ancestral line: Robert Bartlett memorably compared Hugh Capet praying for the defeat of his descendants to Elizabeth I praying for the defeat of the English by Napoleon or Hitler.[6] But, at a political level, so be it: this all serves Dante's anti-French propaganda, and Hugh Capet can go to Hell.

Except, of course, that Hugh Capet is not in Hell but rather in Purgatory. Most readings of the Hugh Capet episode have focused, in one way or another, on its obvious political dimension, an approach recently exemplified by Prue Shaw: 'The energy of this sustained denunciation by the founding father of the French dynasty makes it unmatched as political invective. This is as close as Dante ever comes to using a character in the afterlife simply as a mouthpiece for his own views.'[7] But what happens if we think of Hugh Capet as *not* just an ironic mouthpiece for Dante's political programme? What happens when we consider the spiritual dimension of the episode? We should remember, after all, that the canto is also about the soul of Hugh Capet, and its process of penance and redemption. From such a perspective, Dante-poet may not seem as callous as on a narrowly political reading he might have at first appeared: less a political polemicist, perhaps, and more a confessor and counsellor. Even Hugh Capet's diatribe against his own descendants, in this spiritual sense, may actually begin to seem strangely appropriate. This is because love of one's children was seen in Dante's time as a particularly insidious occasion – hidden under a good intention – for the sin of avarice.

'When Louis IV died in 954, Hugh, then "duke of the Gauls" and "vice-regent of Francia", was asked for "aid and counsel", and summoned all the bishops, as well as the territorial princes who ruled Burgundy, Aquitaine, and even Gothis' (p. 19); 'Hugh Capet's father, Hugh the Great, had been the son of the kings of the Franks (Robert I) and the nephew of another (Odo) . . . Louis IV made this powerful relation [about Hugh the Great] "the second after himself in all kingdoms", a kind of super-prince; for he was the king's lieutenant in both Francia and all the old Carolingian imperial lands claimed by the king' (pp. 19–20). Duby comments that Hugh Capet's 'succession to the throne seemed entirely natural; there was no need to make great play of his (rather remote) Carolingian connections. Already duke of the Franks, Hugh now became their king and, with the crown, accepted responsibility for the various subordinate kingdoms, corresponding to the different "peoples" in West Francia' (pp. 20–21). Although the supporters of Louis V's uncle, Charles, continued to accuse Hugh of usurpation, no contemporary would have doubted his nobility or long-held political standing. Prue Shaw, noting Dante's apparent confusion as to the identity of Hugh Capet, adds that 'it was another Hugh Capet who was a butcher's son'. In reality, *no* Hugh Capet was a butcher's son! Rather, this was a slur on Dante's part, albeit current in some of the pro-Imperial and anti-French propaganda of his time. See Prue Shaw, *Reading Dante*: *From Here to Eternity* (London: Norton, 2014), p. 54.

[6] See Robert Bartlett, 'Purgatorio xx', Lectura Dantis Andreapolitana http://lecturadantisandreapolitana.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/video/purgatorio-canto-xx/.

[7] Shaw, *Reading Dante*, p. 56.

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In *Moralia in Job*, Gregory the Great discusses *amor filiorum* to exemplify the way in which a vice may attack us by concealing itself beneath a virtue. Someone who seems well defended against avarice, Gregory suggests, may be attacked covertly by the apparently sound motivation of providing for his family so that, while his mind is directed with seeming piety to the care of providing for them, he may be secretly seduced and pushed into sin by seeking after wealth.[8] Gregory's emphasis is picked up by Peraldus, who devotes an entire section of his treatise on avarice to this danger.[9] Having treated all the different species of avarice in turn, Peraldus turns to the things which give occasion to avarice, affording the most space to *amor filiorum*:

> Quintum, est amor filiorum. Talibus, qui divitias amant, propter amorem filiorum, ostendendum esset in praedicatione, quod hoc non sit amare filium, sed potius odire, divitias ei male congregare.[10]
>
> [Fifthly, there is the love of one's children. To those who love riches because of their love for their children, it should be shown in preaching that evilly to gather riches for a child is not, in fact, to love him but rather to hate him].

To illustrate the avarice which may ensue upon love of one's children, Peraldus tells a story of a hermit who, guided to Hell in a vision, finds his avaricious father and brother cursing each other in a well of fire:

> Erat quidam usurarius habens duos filios, quorum alter nolens succedere patri in male acquisitis, factus est Eremita. Alius vero, volens succedere patri suo, remansit cum patre suo. Et mortuo patre, ei successit. Et post non multum tempus ipse etiam decessit. Cum autem nunciatum esset Eremitae de morte patris et fratris, doluit valde, credens eos damnatos esse. Et cum rogasset Dominum, ut revelaret ei statum eorum, raptus est, et in infernum ductus, et non inveniebat ibi eos. Sed ad ultimum exierunt de quodam puteo in flamma, primo, pater, deinde filius, mordentes se, et litigantes ad invicem, patre dicente filio: Maledictus sis tu, quia pro te usurarius fui; filius autem e contrario dicebat: imo maledictus sis tu, quia nisi iniuste acquisivisses, ego non retinuissem iniuste, nec damnatus fuissem.[11]

[8] Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, xxxi, 41, 81: 'Si autem fortasse validum contra avaritiam cernit, importune eius cogitationibus domesticorum suorum inopiam suggerit; ut dum mens ad provisionis curam quasi pie flectitur, seducta furtim in rerum ambitu inique rapiatur.' For the history of the sin of avarice prior to Dante, see Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed: The Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[9] See Peraldus, 'De his, quae dant occasionem huic vitio', in Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. iv, pa. 3, pp. 157b–58a.

[10] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. iv, pa. 3, pp. 157b.

[11] Ibid., t. iv, pa. 3, pp. 157b–58a.

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> [There was a usurer who had two sons, one of whom became a hermit so as not to succeed his father in evilly-acquired riches. The other, instead, wanting to succeed his father, stayed with him and, on his death, inherited his wealth. Not long afterwards, he also died. When the hermit heard about the death of his father and brother, he was very upset, believing them both to be damned. And when he asked the Lord to reveal their state to him, he was seized and guided to Hell, and he did not find them there. But, finally, they emerged from a well of fire, first the father and then the son, biting each other and arguing in turn, the father saying to the son: 'Cursed be you, because for you I was a usurer'; the son, instead, said the opposite: 'No, cursed be you, because if you had not unjustly acquired your wealth, I would have not have kept it unjustly, nor would I be damned'].

Peraldus takes pains to stress the powerful pull of avarice: it is love, albeit misdirected, that binds sinners to it. He underlines avarice's long-lasting effect not just on an individual but on his or her children because possessions (unlike, say, food and drink) are durable and outlive us. Even on nearing death, then, we are enchained by avarice because we love possessions not just for ourselves but for our children. No other vice, therefore, is as potent as avarice in drowning souls in the deep sea of Hell.[12]

Avarice is the most serious spiritual illness, and the root of all others.[13] In teaching his children to love worldly things, Peraldus affirms, a father does to them what is commonly done to trap rats: covered with birdlime, rats move around in the straw and, by doing so, gather the material for their own burning. Likewise, the avaricious father ensnares his children with the love of temporal things (the birdlime of eternal torments) and, thus ensnared, they gather riches (the material of their own eternal burning).[14] Just as a burning coal lights up others, so a wealthy father

[12] Ibid., t. iv, pa. 1, c. vi, p. 63a: 'Potens etiam est avaritia, ad submergendum hominem in profundum inferni.'

[13] Ibid., t. iv, pa. 1, c. iii, p. 55a: 'Radix omnium malorum est avaritia. Ad avaritiam ergo, quasi ad radicem omnium malorum praecipui adhibenda esset securis praedicationis. Frustra laboratur in extirpatione malorum si rami amputantur, et radix ista relinquitur'; c. iv, p. 55a: 'inter infirmitates spirituales ipsa est pessima'.

[14] Ibid., t. iv, pa. 1, c. vii, pp. 74b–75a: 'Duodecimo, stultus est avarus circa sua, stultior circa suos, stultissimus circa sepisum ... Valde etiam stultus est avarus circa suos. Facit enim avarus de filiis suis sicut solet fieri de muribus; qui sicut mures inviscantur, et inviscati per paleam incedendo materiam suae exustionis colligunt, quia paleae eis adhaerent. Sic avarus quodammodo inviscat filios suos, dum docet eos temporalia amare. Amor enim temporalium viscus est spiritualium poenarum sicut dicit Gloss. super Laetatus sum. Et filii sic inviscati ob amore temporalium, male congregant materiam sui aeterni incendii.'

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aflame with the fire of cupidity inflames his family dependents and friends with the same.[15] We can summarise, then, four key points about this theoretical treatment of avarice. First, love of one's children was well known in the Christian tradition as a particularly insidious example of occasions to sin. Second, the good intention of love for one's children may lead not just the parent but also his or her children to avarice. Third, teaching a child to love worldly goods is, in fact, to condemn him or her to Hell. Fourth, avarice is the root of all evils and a very grave spiritual illness.

Let us consider, in this light, Hugh Capet's self-presentation. On Dante's account, Hugh Capet usurped the very kingdom of France to give to his son and heirs (*Purg*. xx, 52–60). Himself a son of a butcher ('Figliuol fu'io d'un beccaio di Parigi'; 52), Hugh promoted his son to the widowed crown of France. On the spurious (for Dante) basis that he was going on crusade and might be killed, Hugh Capet made his son king the very year of his own coronation to secure the succession of his line ('le sacrate ossa' [the consecrated bones]; 60).[16] Hugh's assumption of power is, then, the seed of the evil tree, the first drop of the blood which, in time, would be entirely sucked to the desires of the she-wolf of avarice. Hugh describes his own dynasty as the evil plant that overshadows all the Christian lands ('la mala pianta / che la terra cristiana tutta aduggia'; 43–44). Capetian ambition obstructs, and seeks to supplant, the Holy Roman Emperor who, for Dante, is the Divinely ordained minister of justice in the world. Consequently, Rome is widowed not just of the papacy (in Avignon, consumed by avarice), but of the Emperor as well.[17] In an apostrophe to avarice 'O avarizia', Hugh Capet concludes that his offspring are so possessed by

[15] This flame of a father's avarice is thus opposed to the 'divine flame' of Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'Al mio ardor fuor seme le faville, / che mi scaldar de la divina fiamma / onde sono allumati più di mille / de l'Eneïda, dico' [The seeds to my ardour were the sparks from which I took fire, of the divine flame that has kindled thousands: of the *Aeneid*, I mean] (*Purg*. xxi, 96–97).

[16] See, for contrast, Duby, *France in the Middle Ages*, p. 21: 'The election and consecration of his oldest son Robert on 30 December 987, just six months after his own coronation, should not be interpreted as a sign of insecurity. Lothar had done precisely the same eight years earlier. The count of Barcelona had asked for Hugh Capet's help against a Muslim invasion, and Hugh might well march south; it was therefore imperative that a substitute should be ready, imbued through unction with the necessary virtues. There is nothing to suggest that this was disputed, for by birth and by the blood of his royal father and great-grandfather (after whom he was named), Robert was destined to become leader of the Frankish people in his turn.'

[17] Although Dante particularly associates the sin of avarice with the Capetian dynasty, he also associates it with all those who oppose, or fail to fulfil, the Imperial mission. Thus, the 'cupidgia' of Albert and Rudolf of Habsburg, successive kings of the Romans in Dante's own time (1273–1308), distracts them from their imperial duties in the Italian peninsula, leaving the garden of Empire ('l giardin de lo 'mperio') deserted (*Purg*. vi, 103–5). Similarly, the avarice and cowardice ('l'avarizia e la viltate') of Frederick II of Aragon, King of Sicily, led him to desert the Imperial cause after the death of Henry VII in 1313, which Dante also implicitly connects with

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avarice that they do not even care for their own flesh, trading their daughters for money (82–84). Where Ottobono dei Fieschi (Pope Adrian V) had embodied avarice pure and simple (*Purgatorio* XIX, 113–14), Hugh Capet embodies – in the most exemplary way – the love of children that can lead to avarice, with devasting social and political consequences.

With savage satire, Hugh Capet's triple use of the word 'ammenda' (in rhyme position), in *Purgatorio* XX, describes the diabolic anti-justice of his descendant Charles of Anjou:

> Lì cominciò con forza e con menzogna
> la sua rapina; e poscia, per ammenda,
> Pontì e Normandia prese e Guascogna.
> Carlo venne in Italia e, per ammenda,
> vittima fé di Curradino; e poi
> ripinse al ciel Tommaso, per ammenda.
> (*Purg.* XX, 64–69)

> [There with force and fraud it began its plundering, and then,
> to make amends, it took Ponthieu and Normandy and Gascony.
> Charles came into Italy, and, to make amends,
> made a victim of Conradino; and then he drove Thomas back to
> Heaven, to make amends].

The Capetian dynasty acts 'con forza e con menzogna' [with force and fraud], the means – as Virgil spells out in *Inferno* XI, 22–24 – of injustice. Charles of Anjou 'makes amends' by murdering Curradino, the grandson of Frederick II (the last Holy Roman Emperor) and the last of the Hohenstaufen bloodline. Dante even claims that Charles of Anjou murdered Thomas Aquinas while en route to the Council of Lyons (1264) as if, presumably, Thomas was to indict him there. The triple anti-justice of the Capetian rulers on Earth narrated by Hugh Capet in *Purgatorio* XX is corrected, as Pope Adrian V highlights in *Purgatorio* XIX, with the triple emphasis on God's justice ('giustizia . . . giustizia . . . del giusto Sire) in the afterlife:

> Sì come l'occhio nostro non s'aderse
> in alto, fisso a le cose terrene,
> così giustizia qui a terra il merse.
> Come avarizia spense a ciascun bene
> lo nostro amore, onde operar perdési,
> così giustizia qui stretti ne tene,
> ne' piedi e ne le man' legati e presi;

those Trojans who remained in Sicily with Anchises due to sloth, rather than helping to bring to fulfilment Aeneas's mission to found Rome (*Par.* XIX, 130–32).

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e quanto fia piacer del giusto Sire,
tanto staremo immobili e distesi.
(*Purg.* XIX, 118–26)

[Since our eyes, fixed on Earthly things, were not raised up,
so here justice has sunk them to the Earth.
Since avarice extinguished our love for every good, so that our
power to act was lost, so justice keeps us fixed here,
bound and captive in feet and hands; and as long as it shall please
our just Lord, so long will we stay immobile and stretched out].

The justice of 'our just lord' – embodied in the syntactical balance of Adrian's speech ('sì come . . . così . . . come . . . così . . . quanto . . . tanto') – compensates in the afterlife for the avarice of the Capetian dynasty, and for the moral and spiritual abyss left by the eclipse of what were, for Dante, the two Divinely ordained institutions of Church and Empire.

In *Purgatorio* XIX, however, Ottobono dei Fieschi no longer speaks as Pope Adrian V (as *successor Petri*) but as an equal brother ('frate'; 133), a fellow servant ('conservo sono'; 134), seeking the heavenly kingdom. Likewise, Hugh Capet, the *progenitor regium Francorum*, is learning to strip himself of his Earthly and familial ties and to become, instead, an equal brother in a shared fraternity that strives to live in conformity with God's will. The words '*neque nubent*' [neither shall they marry] (*Purg.* XIX, 137) arguably apply, in this context, as much to Hugh Capet's relationship to his descendants as to a pope's pastoral relationship to his flock or to a man's marriage to his wife. Crucially, just as the Emperor Constantine is not punished for the consequence of his donation – the earthly corruption of the papacy from its primitive poverty (*Inf.* XIX, 115–17; *Par.* XX, 55–60) – so Hugh Capet is not punished for the consequence of his avarice: the Capetian line's disastrous impact, in Dante's view, on the political order of medieval Europe.[18] Rather, Hugh Capet is made to atone for the misdirected love of children which, according to Dante, led to his assumption of the French crown in the first place. Hugh's outward renunciation of his family line, in other words, is directly penitential: as the love of his family had spurred him to the avaricious assumption of ever-greater power, wealth, and prestige, so he must renounce these to embrace spiritual poverty.

In the moral scheme of Purgatory, the fact that Hugh Capet castigates his descendants' avarice to the extent that he desires their defeat in battle

[18] At *Par.* VI, 100–9, Dante condemns (through the Emperor Justinian) the Florentine Guelfs who seek to displace the Imperial eagle with the sign of the Capetian dynasty (golden lilies). However, he also condemns the Ghibellines, who appropriate the Imperial eagle for their own factional gain rather than for true universal justice.

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does not mean that he does not still love them with the tenderness of a father. Nor, as is clear from Solomon's discourse on the resurrection of the body, does the kingdom of Heaven require a renunciation of family ties.[19] Nonetheless, from the other-worldly perspective of eternity, Hugh Capet's acquisition of material wealth and secular power for his son and descendants does not appear such a good thing. In Purgatory, Hugh Capet recovers the primary duty of a Christian father: to lead his children not to worldly wealth, power, and success, but rather to eternal beatitude. The point is made more strongly by a comparison with Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti's attitude to his son Guido in Hell: Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, an Epicurean in death as in life, still only cares about his son's secular prowess and Earthly fame (*Inf.* x, 52–72).[20] By contrast, in attacking his descendants' avarice, and in even desiring their misfortune, Hugh Capet is urging them to live in accordance with God's will: in Dante's view, after all, the Capetian line's illegitimate temporal ambitions conflict with God's Divinely ordained Imperial order. As material misfortune was seen as a primary opportunity for spiritual conversion, Hugh Capet is also praying, at another level, for his descendants' salvation. In other words, Hugh desires his family, so converted from avarice like him, to join him in Heaven; Earthly fame or even defamation, by comparison with the eternal beatitude of Heaven, is of little consequence. Where the avaricious father and son in Peraldus's instructional novella on *amor filiorum* curse each other in Hell, the repentant Hugh Capet prays in Purgatory for his descendants' secular failure precisely because this may become an occasion for their salvation: only damnation – and not Earthly misfortune – implies true disaster for the human individual. In the language of Cacciaguida (Dante's own allotted ancestral father-figure), Hugh Capet's denunciation of his descendants, although 'painful at first taste' ('molesta nel primo gusto'), is actually the 'vital nourishment' ('vital nodrimento') that they need (*Par.* xvii, 131–32).

[19] Family ties are celebrated as a crowning fulfilment of the greatest of Christian mysteries: the resurrection of the body. In the heaven of the Sun, Solomon explains how the souls in Paradise actively desire their bodies. In response, the souls race to sing 'Amen', showing a craving not only for their own bodies but also for those of their mothers ('le mamme' [literally 'mummies']), their fathers ('li padri'), and those who were dear to them before they became sempiternal flames ('per li altri che fuor cari / anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme'; *Par.* xiv, 65–66).

[20] See Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 89–97: 'Cavalcante's earthly love for, and pride in, his son breathes through the dialogue. But, tragically, Cavalcante is exclusively concerned with his son's mortal destiny, a destiny which – as Cavalcante already knows his son to be dead by 1304 – could consist of a few more years of earthly life at most. This demonstrates – from Dante's Christian perspective – a terrible failure of pastoral responsibility. Instead of directing his son's spiritual life to his eternal beatitude (as his 'father in the faith'), Cavalcante has been, *and is still*, concerned only with his son's mortal destiny and intellectual renown' (p. 97).

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From the perspective of *amor filiorum* as a key occasion for avarice, the psychological depth of Hugh Capet's first-person narrative thereby begins to surface. This, in turn, leads to a further consideration. Along with revealing Dante's political motivation for foregrounding Hugh Capet (his polemical anti-French propaganda), this spiritual perspective sheds light on a deeply personal rationale. Why does Dante make Hugh Capet the central figure of the terrace of avarice? Why does he highlight this particular aspect: love of children as an occasion to avarice? Surely because love of his own children would have presented Dante with a pressing occasion for, and temptation to, avarice.[21] We need only remember that Petrarch criticised Dante's refusal to accept the humiliating terms offered for his return to Florence precisely because of the effect of that refusal on the lives of his own children.[22] Seen from the perspective of *amor filiorum*, this episode takes on an intensely personal, autobiographical dimension: what better moral and spiritual counsel for Dante-character, at the height of political power during the time of his journey in 1300, than that warning him against this specific temptation to avarice, a temptation he would continue to experience, perhaps especially acutely, during his subsequent exile.

Poverty and the Family: Exemplars of Poverty (*Purg.* XX, 16–33) and Avarice (*Purg.* XX, 97–123)

In light of this emphasis on 'love of children' as the occasion of Hugh Capet's avarice, it is striking that the examples of poverty and liberality all concern their direct impact on family and children. The extreme poverty of Mary is highlighted at precisely the point that she gave birth: 'Povera fosti tanto / quanto veder si può per quello ospizio / dove sponesti il tuo portato santo' [How very poor you were we can see by the shelter where you laid down your holy burden] (*Purg.* XX, 22–24). When parents would naturally feel most strongly the need to have acquired material comfort for

[21] Although this is more speculative, perhaps Dante is also reflecting on his relationship with his own father Alighiero Bellincione, who died in 1283. Probably guilty of usury, Alighiero would have passed on ill-gotten wealth to his son. See Stephen Bembrose, *A New Life of Dante* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2000): 'Certainly both his [Dante's] father and his grandfather had at one time acted as moneylenders (though this is something the poet is not keen to tell us about)' (p. 3).

[22] See Teodolinda Barolini, 'Dante's Ulysses: Narrative and Transgression', in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Amilcare A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 113–32: 'Dante's intransigence in not accepting Florentine terms for repatriation despite the suffering of his family elicited contrasting reactions from Boccaccio, who defended him, and Petrarch, whose criticism implicitly brands him a Ulysses' (p. 116).

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their new child, the Christian archetypal family is presented as entirely poor, and wholly dependent upon the grace and mercy of God. The Christ child was born in a stable – a stark reality that had been recently emphasised in Franciscan spirituality (St Francis reportedly reconstructed the crib to underline the literal reality of the Holy Family's poverty).[23] The classical example of Fabricius, the incorruptible pagan Roman consul, further underlines poverty in relation to family. Fabricius preferred his poverty to riches, his virtue to vice. In the sources known to Dante, the emphasis of the *exemplar* is that Fabricius chose poverty despite its implications for his family and, in particular, despite the fate of his daughters left without dowries. His honourable example is presented, nonetheless, as a dowry greater than riches. Fabricius's supreme virtue ultimately led the Roman state to endow his daughters on his behalf as well as to pay the expenses of his funeral (normally the duty of a family). This implicit reference to Fabricius's daughters is made explicit in the Christian example of St Nicholas, who provided dowries for three impoverished sisters so that they might escape prostitution (*Purg*. XX, 31–33). Again, where providing for one's children would seem a primary duty of a father, Dante emphasises that it cannot excuse the injustice and moral corruption which proceed from avarice. Instead, the primary duty of a father is to lead his children, by his example, to the eternal riches of heaven.

Hugh Capet must learn this lesson painfully in the afterlife: because of the intensity of his cries, he is the only soul ('sola / tu'; 35–36) whom Dante hears crying out these examples of poverty.[24] By contrast, Dante

[23] Havely documents the strong Franciscan resonances of Dante's treatment. See Havely, *Dante and the Franciscans*, p. 105: 'The poverty of the Virgin and of the Nativity scene is also a theme that recurs in the *Sacrum commercium*, as well as other Franciscan texts from St Francis onwards.' See also Ibid., n. 53: 'the emphasis on the deliberate choice of poverty by Christ and the Virgin (despite the former being "rich beyond measure") can be found in St Francis's "Letter to All the Faithful" of 1224–26.'

[24] As it turns out (*Purg*. XX, 118–23), all the souls utter the *exempla* according to the affection that spurs them now to greater, now to lesser steps ('ch'ad ir ci sprona / ora a maggiore e ora a minor passo'; 119–20). Only Hugh Capet was raising his voice in that part of the terrace (122–23), which embodies the intensity of his sin as well as progress in its purgation. Indeed, Hugh is compared to a woman crying in the pains of labour, 'dolce Maria' [sweet Mary]. The analogy is clear: as the woman going through immense pain nonetheless experiences the joyful expectation of her baby, so the soul experiencing the bitterest pain of penance nonetheless joyfully hopes for the new life of future beatitude that awaits. Hugh Capet emphasises the increasing intensity of the souls' engagement with the *exempla* of avarice at night: repetition of *exempla* ('noi repetiam'; 103) leads to such a powerful recall ('si ricorda'; 109) of the folly of Achan that Joshua's anger seems still to bite him in Purgatory; the souls then accuse ('accusiam'; 112) Saffira and her husband, before praising ('lodiam'; 113) the very hooves ('i calci'; 113) which kick to death Heliodorus; finally, they cry out ('ci si grida'; 116) the vengeful words of Orodes, king of Persia, against Crassus. The heroes and villains of the micro-stories, in other words, are given new life in the souls' psychological

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had been forced to learn the lesson painfully through experience in his own life. The temptation to have compromised his principles through his desire for his children's wellbeing must have been as strong, as Dante's inability to provide for them (living by others' bread) would have caused him (and them) suffering.[25] But, surely taking Fabricius as a model, Dante's epistles of the period present himself to be as morally upright and steadfast as he admonishes others to be in his verse. Dante refused the amnesty offered to him in 1315 despite knowing full well the consequences for his family (the sentence of exile and death was extended to them). How could a man familiar with philosophy (*vir phylosophiae domesticus*) and preaching justice (*praedicans iustitiam*) so abase himself as to present himself as a criminal and offer money to those who have so unjustly injured him? Only if a way could be found which would not detract from his good name and honour would Dante return, and willingly so, to his native Florence.[26] It is thus understandable that Dante-character should rejoice in the *exempla* of poverty – 'O anima che tanto ben favelle' [O soul who speaks of so much good] (34) – for he would certainly have needed such consolation in the years ahead.

Dante's programme for spiritual development in his vision of Purgatory directly mirrors and draws upon the kind of moral instruction which would have structured his own Christian life of penance. Peraldus's *De vitiis* is again a direct influence here. The preaching manual lists eight remedies against avarice.[27] To defend against an avaricious way of life, Peraldus writes, a person must reflect on death, the poverty of Jesus, the danger in which we live, and the misery connected with Earthly delights. To develop the correct Christian disposition towards material goods, a person must reflect on the eternal riches of heaven, associate with others who despise Earthly things, place faith in God, and obtain grace through

transformation: it is as if Polymnestor himself circles the mountain (although, of course, it is only his name cried out by the souls).

[25] Dowries in early-fourteenth-century Florence had risen to record highs, and Dante had a daughter (Antonia) as well as two or perhaps three sons (Pietro and Jacopo are, of course, well known to us through their respective commentaries on the *Commedia*). We do not know, for example, whether it was by force of circumstance or choice that his daughter became a nun. See Havely, *Dante*, p. 51: 'Antonia entered a convent there [in Ravenna], taking (as some kind of comment on her father's poetry?) the name of "Sister Beatrice"; and she is referred to as "daughter of the late Dante Alighieri" in a document of 1371, some time after her death.'

[26] See *Epistola*, XII, 3: 'Absit a viro phylosophie domestico temeraria tantum cordis humilitas, ut more cuiusdam Cioli et aliorum infamium quasi vinctus ipse se patiatur offerri! Absit a viro predicante iustitiam ut perpessus iniurias, iniuriam inferentibus, velut benemerentibus, pecuniam suam solvat!'

[27] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. iv, pa. 4, pp. 158a–60a.

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almsgiving and prayer. Dante foregrounds all these aspects in the terrace of avarice: the *meditatio mortis* and the shortness of life ('lo cammin corto / di quella vita ch' al termine vola' [the brief path of life that flies to its end]; *Purg*. XX, 38–39); the poverty of Jesus (XX, 19–24); the danger in which we live (XIX, 103–5); and the misery connected with Earthly delights (XIX, 108). Adrian V – who despises Earthly things after his late conversion (XIX, 109–11) – admonishes Dante-character to reflect on Jesus's parables about the eternal riches of heaven (XIX, 136–38); repeated invocations are made to God (XX, 13–15; 94–96) while the souls in Purgatory, unable to obtain grace by almsgiving, nonetheless are stripped of their wealth and pray incessantly for God's grace.

The penitent souls' attention to the passage of time and history is a particularly striking feature of the terrace of avarice. From a spiritual perspective, this underlines the brevity of an individual life and the vanity of Earthly possessions and power. The movement through medieval history in Hugh Capet's speech – from 941 to the present (1300), and then onwards into the future (perhaps as far as 1312 or 1314) – is reflected in the movement forwards and backwards across the sweep of providential history in Dante's *exempla* of avarice. Indeed, the first two *exempla* are pagan (Pygmalion and Midas), the third from the Old Testament (Achan), the fourth twin example is from the New Testament (Ananias and Saffira); the fifth from the Old Testament (Heliodorus), and the sixth and seventh are classical (Polymnestor and Crassus). The resultant pairings create a temporal chiasmus, a chronological order highlighted by the sequence of temporal adverbs: 'poi' (XX, 109), 'Indi' (112), and 'ultimamente' (116).[28] By repeating incessantly these examples of avarice, the souls must direct their gaze forwards and backwards across a vast stretch of time. The purpose of this spiritual exercise, then, is to free them from a narrow attachment to transitory worldly goods and power.

The key emphasis in Dante's examples of avarice is that the love of gold ('oro' is punned on throughout the sequence) leads people to a whole messy gamut of evils.[29] Thus Pygmalion's greediness for gold ('la voglia sua

[28] See Hollander, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 103. See also Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 97–123: 'Si osserva la studiata loro collocazione, come spesso in queste serie di essempi: nel primo gruppo, un esempio religioso (Maria), uno classico (Fabrizio), un terzo di nuovo religioso (San Niccolò); nel secondo, tre personaggi tratti della storia sacra (Acan, Anania e Safira, Eliodoro) sono inseriti tra due coppie di personaggi classici (Pigmalione e Mida, Polinestore e Crasso).'

[29] See Durling and Martinez, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 103–20: 'All but one of the sources of the examples include the Latin word for gold, *aurum*. Dante inserts a near-pun relating gold to avarice, It. *oro* to *avaro*, in lines 105–6, and threads the syllable *or* in the rhymes of 107–17, reserving *-oro* for the last set, and the full word itself for the last rhyme (line 117).' As Benvenuto comments, we are born

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de l'oro ghiotta'; XX, 105) makes him a traitor, thief, and parricide ('traditore e ladro e paricida / fece'; 104–5); moreover, his sins involved at least violence and fraud.[30] Within the classical frame, the three Biblical examples (Achan, Ananias and Saffira, and Heliodorus) highlight that, although the love of gold is evil, gold itself is morally neutral. The three negative *exempla* throw into relief three Biblical figures who exemplify a correct use of money: Joshua had the soldier Achan stoned to death for theft, but saved the treasure to consecrate an altar to God (Joshua 6:17; 8:26); Onias, the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem, jealously guarded the temple's treasure against Heliodorus not for his own ends but to provide for widows and orphans (2 Maccabees)[31]; and St Peter upbraided Ananias and Saffira for defrauding the Holy Spirit by holding back money which should have served the poor (Acts V:1–11; Matthew 10:21).[32] In this way, Dante's three Biblical *exempla* not only underline the path to be avoided but, like the three *exempla* of poverty, point towards the path to pursue. The emphasis, in all the examples, is on chosen poverty and the avoidance of avarice even where this action may put a person's own family in apparent jeopardy: each Christian must place his or her faith in God who will provide.

Dante exerts particular rhetorical weight on Polymnestor, the penultimate *exemplar* of avarice, an example which reinforces Dante's special concern for the effect of avarice on family and on familial ties. The name

naked and needing many things. As all necessities can be possessed through money, we may be led to any means to acquire it; no other vice, therefore, leads men to ever more and greater evils (Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 1–9).

[30] Some scholars have argued that the seven *exempla* of avarice in this canto correspond to the seven daughters of avarice listed by Gregory: treachery (Pygmalion), fraud (Achan), falsehood (Heliodorus), perjury (Ananias and Saffira), inquietude (Midas), violence (Crassus), and insensibility to mercy (Polymnestor). The parallel is found, for example, in Ernesto Trucchi, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 97–102. Only Midas's insatiable desire for gold, however, seems narrowed to one species or daughter of avarice: the inquietude or restlessness of the miser (a 'covetous man shall not be satisfied with money'; Ecclesiastes 5:9), while the most powerful image of such restlessness is arguably Florence herself (*Purg*. VI, 145–51). Although this first example is framed with the last, the *contrapasso* of Crasso – whose enemies poured molten gold into his mouth with the words 'aurum sitisti, aurem bibe' – clearly takes us back to the *exempla* of Midas (Dante's most likely source is Cicero's *De officiis*, I. 30).

[31] See Ernesto Trucchi, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 109–11. In addition, the Achan and Heliodorus episodes had common allegorical readings in the medieval period. Joshua, who led Israel to the peace of Canaan, is a type for Jesus, who opened the way to the eternal rest of heaven. Onias's resistance to the pagan plundering of Heliodorus foreshadows Jesus's reclaiming of the temple for God against the moneylenders (John 2:14–16).

[32] See, for example, Chiose ambrosiane, gloss to *Purg*. XX, 112: 'Ananias et Saphira moniti a Petro et Paulo ut omnia venderent pauperibus eroganda, defraudaverunt dimidium pretii et, mendaces, ad pedes apostolorum mortui ceciderunt.'

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of Polymnestor, we learn, circles the whole mountain of Purgatory in infamy (xx, 114–15) due to his murder of Priam's youngest son, Polydorus. The latter's fate recalls, of course, Dante's transposition of this episode of the *Aeneid* onto the wood of the suicides in *Inferno* xiii. Polydorus echoes the figure of Pier della Vigna, who, like Dante, had been unjustly accused of corruption and embezzlement. But this example also highlights the errors of two fathers: Priam, who thought that a large sum of gold would protect his son (who, it turns out, would have been safer left in poverty), and Polymnestor, who betrayed Priam's trust by murdering his son out of greed. The example is, at once, further incitement to remorse and penance for Hugh Capet – who now sees that, by securing wealth and power for his descendants, he led them, evermore avaricious, to spiritual perdition – and further consolation for Dante – who, unable to provide materially for himself and his children, nonetheless teaches them, through his poem, the path of Christian virtue. Beyond the political polemic, it is this spiritual dimension – located in the correct love of children – which is the true heart of the episode. This dimension makes sense of Hugh Capet's especially intense suffering in the terrace of avarice, and also of the particular joy and consolation that Dante-character feels in response to the *exempla* of poverty.

The She-Wolf of Avarice (*Purg.* xx, 10–15) and the Poor Shepherds (*Purg.* xx, 124–44)

The moral *exempla* not only frame Hugh Capet's narrative, but derive their psychological depth from it. As we work outwards from the examples of poverty and avarice, however, it is clear from the apostrophe to the she-wolf of avarice (*Purg.* xx, 4–15) that Dante's contemporaries are not imbibing such necessary moral instruction and, from the implicit comparison with the poor shepherds (124–44), that the pastors of the Church are failing to live by or provide it. Where Dante had already described avarice as the bitterest vice on the mountain (xix, 117), he emphasises its ubiquity in *Purgatorio* xx: the terrace of avarice is so stricken with souls that Virgil and Dante-character must squeeze their way past them on the near side of the cliff (xx, 4–9).[33] Avarice is perhaps viewed as the root

[33] For his first readers, Dante's simile – they are like those walking under battlements – could only evoke images of dead corpses surrounding a besieged city, victims of the incessant wars in the Italian peninsula: 'non stanno sanza guerra / li vivi tuoi, e l'un l'altro si rode / di quei ch'un muro e una fossa serra' [the living are not without war, and of those whom one wall and one moat lock in, each gnaws the other] (*Purg.* vi, 82–84).

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cause not only of the incessant wars in the Italian peninsula but also of the infernal City of Dis itself: the blood of the Capetian dynasty (which is synonymous with avarice; xx, 83) plunders 'con forza e con menzogna' (64), reflecting the twofold division of malice in the city of Dis by violence and by fraud ('o con forza o con frode'; *Inf.* xi, 24), while the lance of Judas (*Purg.* xx, 73–74) recalls the further division between simple and treacherous fraud in the Pit of Cocytus (*Inf.* xxxi–xxxiv).[34] In a rhetorical crescendo echoed even at a micro level – '*mal* pugna' (1); 'il *mal*' (8); '*mala*detta' (9) – the she-wolf of *Inferno* i returns in *Purgatorio* xx to be identified explicitly as avarice:[35]

> Maladetta sie tu, antica lupa,
> che più che tutte l'altre bestie hai preda
> per la tua fame sanza fine cupa!
> O ciel, nel cui girar par che si creda
> le condizion di qua giù trasmutarsi,
> quando verrà per cui questa disceda?
> (*Purg.* xx, 10–15)

[A curse be on you, ancient she-wolf, that more than any other beast find prey for your endlessly hollow hunger!
O heavens, whose turning, we believe, changes conditions down here, when will he come who will drive her away?]

The souls on the terrace must weep out 'a goccia a goccia' [drop by drop] the evil of avarice that, Dante emphasises, fills the world ('il mal che tutto 'l mondo occupa'; xx, 7–8).[36]

It is striking that the earthquake, representing an individual's purgation from avarice, should usher in Statius (as yet unidentified) as a 'figura Christi' (xx, 124–41). In the *Inferno*, Dante's Christian allegorical reading of the *Thebaid* represents Statius's Thebes as an embodiment of

[34] Dante's Statius will refer to the blood sold by Judas ('[i]l sangue per Giuda venduto'; *Purg.* xxi, 84). Barbara Reynolds claims that avarice, in one form or another, links all the ten *bolge* of fraud. See Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man* (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 157–68 (p. 167).

[35] The '*antica* lupa' itself recalls, of course, '*antica* strega' which is also glossed as avarice in the previous canto (*Purg.* xix, 58–63).

[36] Karen Wagner emphasises that 'divinely inspired contrition is both acknowledged and nourished by its physical expression through groans, sighs, and tears'. See Wagner, 'Cum Aliquis Venerit Ad Sacerdotum', pp. 201–18. 'Only when this sorrow is demonstrated physically can a verbal form of confession be accepted' (p. 208). In monasteries, penitence 'was understood to be unceasing – the perfect humility and satisfaction for sins could only be assured through tears, "by one who, by constantly continuing to groan and sigh sorrowfully, has removed every spot of his former stains"' (p. 211).

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Augustine's corrupt Earthly city, with Florence and Pisa as its modern-day counterparts.[37] This may underpin the significance of the analogy to the shepherds who 'first heard the song' announcing the birth of Christ, and were entrusted by the angel as its messengers (xx, 139–42; Luke 2:8–18).[38] Here it is Dante and Virgil, who, standing 'immobile and in suspense' ('immobili e sospesi'; 139), are entrusted with the 'good news' of the Incarnation. And it lends credence to Benvenuto's interpretation of the Latona myth (130–32): the two brightest lights (the Sun and the Moon) that Delos sent into the sky may stand for Dante and Statius, the two renowned poets (one modern and one ancient), who, rising to Heaven, may guide the Christian flock.[39] On such a reading, Dante is establishing himself and Statius as Christian shepherds who will provide true ethical guidance against the she-wolf of avarice where the modern-day pastors of the Church (as exemplified by Pope Adrian V in the previous canto) have failed.[40] In precisely the canto in which 'love of children' is shown as a dangerous occasion for avarice, Dante dramatizes – through Statius and Virgil – his own vocation to assume, as poet, the mantle of pastor and 'father of faith', thereby helping to safeguard Christians from the she-wolf of avarice and to direct them to Heaven.

The Cupidity for Knowledge (*Purg.* xx, 1–3 and 142–51)

To be an ethical guide requires Dante to pass on to others the fruits of his own contemplation. Notably, Peraldus treats the avarice for knowledge

[37] See *Inf.* xxvi, 1–3: 'Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' sì grande / che per mare e per terra batti l'ali, / e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande!' [Rejoice, Florence, since you are so great that on sea and land you beat your wings, and your name spreads through Hell!]; *Inf.* xxxiii, 89: 'novella Tebe' [O new Thebes]. For the allegorical reading of Statius, see, for example, Padoan, *Il pio Enea*, pp. 125–50.

[38] The shepherds are first sent to the 'infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger' (Luke 2:16) and, on finding him there, make 'known the message that had been told them about this child' (17). As scholars have highlighted, the Statius scene unfolds within the liturgical context of the Easter Vigil mass, with the singing of the 'Gloria' ending the period of Lent and ushering in Eastertide.

[39] Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* xx, 130–32: 'Et hic nota quantum comparatio est propriissima; sicut enim Delos insula clarissima emisit ibi duo clarissima lumina ad coelum; ita nunc mons purgatorii clarissimus emittebat ad coelum duos clarissimos poetas, unum antiquum, scilicet, Statium, alium modernum, scilicet, Dantem: de Virgilio non loquor, quia non ivit ad coelum.'

[40] In his epistle to the cardinals (1314), Dante defends his teaching mandate, sarcastically distancing himself from the clergy by highlighting his poverty: 'Nulla pastorali auctoritate abutens, quoniam divitie mecum non sunt' [I abuse no pastoral authority given that I possess no riches] (*Epist.* ii, 3). In his epistle to Cangrande, Dante explicitly underlines his pastoral role to guide the flock from error: 'Nos autem quibus optimum quod est in nobis noscere datum est, gregum vestigia sectari non decet, quin ymo suis erroribus obviare tenemur' (*Epist.* xiii, 2).

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(*avaritia scientiae*) as the last species of avarice, worse even than the avarice for money.[41] Whereas the miser does not want to share the light of his candle, the miser of knowledge does not want to communicate the light of his wisdom.[42] As Delcorno has suggested, this may be the inspiration for Dante's metaphor for Virgil, who lit up the way for others but not for himself.[43] The other vice of knowledge strongly associated with avarice (as well as with sloth) is curiosity.[44] In the prologue and epilogue of *Purgatorio* XX, we witness Dante-character practising temperance not with respect to the cupidity for gold, but rather with respect to the cupidity for knowledge: the canto's opening (XX, 1–3) refers back to the closing dialogue of *Purgatorio* XIX, which had roused Dante-character's curiosity, while its ending (XX, 145–51) refers forward to *Purgatorio* XXI, 1–6 as, seemingly more 'desirous to know' ('desideroso di sapere') than at any other point in his life, Dante-character seeks to understand the earthquake event.

The metaphor underlining the first terzina is particularly significant: Dante's will is a sponge which is left unsatiated by the water (speech) of Adrian V (the well): 'trassi de l'acqua non sazia la spugna' [I drew my sponge unsated from the water] (XX, 3). If the water is a gloss on the reference to his niece Alagia (XIX, 142–45) and the evildoings of the Fieschi, the implication is that – like the Samaritan woman at the well (XXI, 1–6) – Dante must turn from Earthly matters to the spiritual nourishment of Christ. If the water is, instead, the very Holy Scripture to which Pope Adrian had also just alluded (the 'santo evangelico suono / che dice "*neque nubent*"'; XIX, 136–37), a further double priority is implied: for Adrian, penance trumps even his obligation to preach the Gospel; for Dante, charity trumps even his curiosity about spiritual matters (as St Gregory highlights: 'Non curiositatem acuit, sed charitatem

[41] See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. 4, pa. 3, c. xiv, p. 151a: 'ultimo loco inter species avaritiae, quae pertinent ad ministros Ecclesiae Dei, dicendum est de avaritia scientiae, quae videtur deterior esse, quam avaritia pecuniae'.

[42] Ibid., t. 4, pa. 3, c. xiv, p. 151b: 'Et miser valde reputaretur, qui lumen candelae suae candelis aliorum nollet communicare. Cui similis est ille qui lumen sapientiae non vult aliis communicare.'

[43] See Delcorno, *Exemplum*, pp. 216–18. Statius compares Virgil to one who 'walks at night, who carries the light behind him and does not help himself, but instructs the persons coming after' ('Facesti come quei che va di notte, / che porta il lume dietro e sé non giova, / ma dopo sé fa le persone dote'; *Purg.* XXII, 67–69).

[44] Peraldus lists 'curiositas' as one of three obstacles to diligence in study. See Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. v, pa. 2 ch. 7, pp. 200a–b: 'Secondo impedit diligentiam studii, curiositas, quae vult videre omnia quae sequuntur. Contra quam remedium est, animo velut quoddam frenum imponere, et non permittere vagari illum ad sequentia … oculus cordis semper nova videre appetit, sicut et oculus corporis.'

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accendit').[45] Dante-character's internal spiritual battle with curiosity is underlined even at a micro level by the opening chiasmus, with three verbal pairs in just two lines: 'Contra miglior voler voler mal pugna; / onde contra 'l piacer mio, per piacerli' (*Purg.* XX, 1–2). Dante's own will ('voler') and pleasure ('il piacer mio') are framed by the better will ('miglior voler') of his neighbour, Ottobono dei Fieschi, whom Dante pleases ('per piacerli') by leaving to continue his penance.[46] As Francesco da Buti's gloss on this passage suggests, alongside the chiastic outwards movement from the self ('my pleasure') to the neighbour ('pleasing him'), the metaphor of the sponge seems to anticipate the perfect accord of the individual will in God's will reflected by Piccarda's 'E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace' (*Par.* III, 85).[47]

Significantly, Dante-character's desire at the close of *Purgatorio* XX is framed with regard to Christian wisdom rather than to worldly knowledge. At this point, Dante unmistakably calques the book of Wisdom – 'in magno viventes inscientiae bello' [they live in a great war of ignorance] – to identify his desire: 'Nulla ignoranza mai con tanta guerra / mi fé desideroso di sapere' [No ignorance ever assailed me with so much desire to know] (*Purg.* XX, 145–46; Wisdom 14:22). As we discover, his natural thirst ('la sete natural'; *Purg.* XXI, 1) is satisfied only by the wisdom of Christ: 'con l'acqua onde la femminetta / samaritana domandò la grazia' [with the water of which the poor Samaritan woman begged the gift] (XXI, 1–6; John 4: 5–15).

Framing Conversions: Pope Adrian V (*Purg.* XIX) and Statius (*Purg.* XXI–XXII)

Dante frames the canto of Hugh Capet (*Purg.* XX) with his encounter with Pope Adrian V (*Purg.* XIX, 97–114) and with Statius's encounter with Virgil (*Purg.* XXI–XXII), a narrative sequence highlighted by Priamo della

[45] Cited in Gabrielle Rossetti, gloss to *Purg.* XX, 1–3.

[46] See Giuseppe Giancalone, gloss to *Purg.* XX, 2–3: 'Questo inizio retorico e sentenzioso ha la funzione che i retori del tempo gli assegnavano "è un avviamento attraverso una verità d'ordine generale al caso particolare che vuol essere trattato, un punto di passaggio tra l'incontro improvvisamente interrotto con Adriano V e la nuova materia che D. si accinge a svolgere in uno stile che sacrifica la forma narrativa e drammatica per puntare su vistosi effetti d'eloquenza."'

[47] Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XX, 1–15: 'Fa qui similitudine, cioè che la volontà sua era come una spugna, e che li desidèri, ch'elli avea di sapere altre cose da quello spirito, rimaseno non sazi, come rimane la spugna quando si cava dall'acqua, inanti che sia tutta piena.'

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Quercia in his single illustration of the three episodes.[48] However surprising such a pairing of encounters might initially appear, Dante deliberately presents them in antithesis through precise textual and narrative parallels. Virgil cannot believe that avarice could have found a place within Statius's breast (XXII, 23–25). As matters turn out, it did not: Statius was subject to its opposite extreme, prodigality. Crucially, Dante uses the same triple rhyme set in exactly the same order ('vita / partita / punita') to describe Pope Adrian V's avarice ('del tutto avara; / or, come vedi, qui ne son punita'; XIX, 113–14) and Statius's prodigality ('Or sappi ch'avarizia fu partita / troppo da me'; XXII, 34–35). At a narrative level, Dante represents Statius's conversion as the mirror image of Pope Adrian V's conversion: where everyone might suppose that Ottobono dei Fieschi, because of his outward ecclesiastical career culminating as a '*successor Petri*', would be one of the elect (the 'eletti di Dio'), it turns out that he is saved in a last-month conversion despite being a cleric and despite having been pope. Whereas Statius gave no ostensible indication that he was anything other than a pagan, Dante presents him as a secret convert to Christianity. Dante invites us to read these two conversion narratives, therefore, in counterpoint as two moral *exempla*.

Born in the second decade of the thirteenth century when the papacy was consolidating its temporal power under Pope Innocent III, Ottobono dei Fieschi rose quickly through the clerical ranks due, in no small part, to family connections (his uncle was Pope Innocent IV).[49] Under the influence of Hugh Capet's descendant Charles of Anjou, Ottobono became the third pope elected in 1276, the year of the four popes; he lasted just over a month ('un mese e poco più'; XIX, 103), from 12 July to 18 August. In Dante's polemical account, Ottobono's end of life is presented in polarised terms as a dramatic psychological conversion from love of temporal power and wealth to love of God:

> La mia conversïone, omè! fu tarda;
> ma, come fatto fui roman pastore,
> così scopersi la vita bugiarda.
> Vidi che lì non s'acquetava il core,
> né più salir potiesi in quella vita;
> per che di questa in me s'accese amore.

[48] Priamo della Quercia (1444–c. 1450), 'Detail of a Miniature of Dante and Virgil with Pope Adrian V, Hugh Capet, and Statius, in Purgatory', in Yates Thompson 36, f. 100, British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts.

[49] For a useful historical discussion of Ottobono, see Clotilde Soave-Bowe, '*Purgatorio* XIX: Adrian V', in *Dante Readings*, ed. by Eric Haywood (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1987), pp. 123–42 (pp. 135–40).

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Fino a quel punto misera e partita
da Dio anima fui, del tutto avara;
or, come vedi, qui ne son punita.
(*Purg.* XIX,106–14)

[My conversion, alas! was late, but, when I became
the Roman shepherd, then I discovered life to be deceptive.
I saw that my heart was not quieted there, nor could
I rise any higher in that life: thus was kindled in me the love
of this one.
Until that point I was a wretched soul separated from God,
entirely greedy; now, as you see, I am punished for it here].

For the entirety of his ecclesiastical career ('fino a quel punto'; 112), Ottobono had served not God but unrelenting avarice: he had been 'misera' [wretched], 'partita / da Dio' [separated from God], and 'del tutto avara' [entirely avaricious]. Only upon reaching the highest possible station attainable in the medieval world did Ottobono recognise the vanity of temporal goods and begin to love the heavenly city.[50] A good argument for the failure of temporal things to satisfy human desire, in other words, is to have them. Thus, the Latinism of Ottobono's speech 'non s'acquetava il core' echoes the famous opening of Augustine's *Confessions*: 'inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te' [my soul is restless until it rests in you]. The moral lesson of his *exemplum* for the ordinary Christian is clear: even the highest power, wealth, and prestige (as achieved by a medieval pope) will not fulfil your desire. Speaking to Ottobono at the height of his own political career as one of the six priors of Florence, this is surely a lesson that Dante-character knows from his own experience. Like Ottobono, he has also discovered on his journey through the afterlife (the prophecies of *Inferno* VI, X, and XV) how short-lived and potentially destructive such power can be.

Ottobono dei Fieschi's conversion from the sin of avarice (*Purg.* XIX) is mirrored, then, by Statius's conversion from prodigality (*Purg.* XXI). Where Dante had some historical evidence for Ottobono's avarice,

[50] Soave-Bowe is, in my view, overly generous to Dante in concluding that 'the historical evidence [about Adrian V], even if it only indirectly applies to the character as he appears in Dante, nonetheless confirms the poet's judgement'. Even if one takes at face value the accusations of the English chronicler Thomas Wykes (namely, that Ottobono, on leaving his mission in England as papal legate, took gold and silver by the sackful), Dante's charge that he was entirely avaricious until assuming the papal crown seems difficult to sustain. As the historian F. M. Powicke's conclusion, approvingly cited by Soave-Bowe, states: 'The legation of the Cardinal brought peace, his constitutions ... breathed a new life into the ecclesiastical body. In contemporary eyes his mission was not an invasion but a work of healing' (Soave-Bowe, *Purgatorio* XIX, p. 141). See also F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 527–28.

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however, the same can barely be said of Statius's prodigality. In the *accessus* to the commentaries on Statius's *Thebaid* circulating in Dante's time, a passage from Juvenal's seventh satire introduced (and was the key source for) his biography:[51]

> currītur ad vocem iucundam et carmen amicae
> Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius Urbem
> promisitque diem: tanta dulcedine captos
> adficit ille animos tantaque libidine volgi
> auditur. sed cum fregit subsellia versu
> esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.
> (Juvenal, Satire 7:82–87)[52]
>
> [When Statius has made Rome happy by fixing a day, everyone rushes to hear his gorgeous voice and the poetry of his darling *Thebaid*. Their hearts are captivated by the sheer lusciousness he inspires and the crowd listens in sheer ecstasy. But when he's broken the benches with his poetry, he'll go hungry unless he sells his virgin *Agave* to Paris].

Juvenal seems to be implying that Statius, needing money, prostituted his poetic talent to write a pantomime for an actor, Paris, the one-time favourite of the Emperor Domitian. Dante would have been loath to follow such an insinuation about Statius's character, given his conviction that all those who write for money are not even *litterati* at all.[53] By contrast, Dante seems to have inferred that Statius's prodigality reduced him to the misery and humiliation of going hungry (*esurit*; 87).[54]

[51] See Harold Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius: Volume III, Reception: The Vitae and Accessus* (Arlington, 2009).The *accessus* introductions in the commentaries give invaluable insights into the context of Dante's own treatment. Most notably, Statius is presented as a *poeta doctus*, 'whose wisdom is recognised through his poetry', and who wrote the *Thebaid* as a specific response to the Emperor Domitian's philosophical question about whether one could escape one's fate: 'In *accessus* to the *Thebaid*, he [Statius] is in a position to chastise or instruct the emperor; here, the emperor turns to him for philosophical advice' (p. 37). This is, of course, the role Dante envisaged for himself as philosopher guide to the Holy Roman Emperor. See also Ruth Parkes, 'Reading Statius through a Biographical Lens', in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. by W. J. Dominiak, C. E. Newlands, and K. Gervais (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 465–80 (especially pp. 466–67).

[52] The Latin text and English translation are taken from the Loeb classical library series: *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and trans. by Susanna Morton Braund (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[53] *Conv.* I, ix, 3: 'E a vituperio di loro dico che non si deono chiamare litterati, però che non acquistano la lettera per lo suo uso, ma in quanto per quella guadagnano denari o dignitate; sì come non si dèe chiamare citarista chi tiene la cetera in casa per prestarla per prezzo, e non per usarla per sonare' [And to their disgrace I say that they should not even be called learned, since they do not acquire learning for its own sake but for the sake of gaining money or position; just as one should not be called a lutist who keeps his lute at home to loan it out for money and not to play it].

[54] See, for example, Paratore, 'Stazio', pp. 419–20.

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It is important to emphasise that Dante had no more evidence that Statius was a prodigal than that he was a secret convert to Christianity. Indeed, Dante entirely invents the story of Statius's conversion from prodigality – namely, that, after reading a passage of Virgil, he realised the error of his ways:

> E se non fosse ch'io drizzai mia cura
> quand'io intesi là dove tu chiame,
> crucciato quasi a l'umana natura:
> 'Perché non reggi tu, o sacra fame
> de l'oro, l'appetito de' mortali?'
> voltando sentirei le giostre grame.
> Allor m'accorsi che troppo aprir l'ali
> potean le mani a spendere, e pente' mi
> così di quel come de li altri mali.
> (*Purg.* XXII, 37–45)

[And had it not been that I straightened out my desires, when I understood the place where you cry out, almost angry at human nature:
'Why do you, O accursed hunger for gold, not govern the appetite of mortals?' I would be turning about, feeling the grim jousts.
Then I perceived that one's hands can open their wings too much in spending, and I repented of that as of my other vices].

Statius understands the Virgilian *dictum* to entail a condemnation of both prodigality and avarice. In my view, this is because Dante considered that sinners may hunger for gold either to give it away (the vice of prodigality) or to retain it (the vice of avarice) but, in both cases, he perceived this craving to be accursed (*sacer*) and detestable (*execrabilis*).[55] For Dante,

[55] This interpretation of the Virgilian *dictum* (which I find most convincing) was first proffered by Benvenuto da Imola. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXII, 37–55: 'hic Statius largius interpretatur istud dictum, et dicit quod Virgilius arguit intemperantiam divitiarum tam in dando quam in retinendo . . . *o sacra fame dell'oro*, idest, o execrabilis cupiditas auri, *perchè non reggi tu l'appetito de' mortali*? quia alii appetunt immoderate propter dare, alii propter retinere.' I realise, of course, that this interpretation implies that Dante is using 'sacra' as an explicit Latinism here, and that it runs counter to those who see in this episode an affirmation of the principle of the Aristotelian golden mean in the appetite. However, as I argued in Chapter 3, Dante is not encouraging a moderate appetite for gold or wealth on the terrace of avarice; rather, he is opposing that hunger for wealth (whether to retain it or to give it away) with the evangelical virtues of poverty and charity (through almsgiving). See, for opposing standpoints, Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, pp. 256–68 (especially 259–60); R.A. Shoaf, '"Auri sacra fames" and the Age of God (*Purg.* XII, 40–41 and 148–50)', *Dante Studies*, 96 (1978), 195–99. Heslin rightly recognises that such perspectives involve 'very strange mistranslations or misinterpretations of Virgil', which are rather implausible to attribute either to Statius or to Dante: 'Statius' freakishly bizarre misreading of Polydorus' words is impossible to justify on an intellectual basis, as Dante surely knew.' See Peter Heslin, 'Statius', pp. 512–26 (p. 515). However, Heslin's 'resolution' is unsatisfactory and, in my view, equally implausible: 'What justifies it is the crucial result that it produced in the internal reader, Dante's

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indeed, the hunger for gold is always an evil, even though he considered gold itself to be morally neutral.[56]

Moral and Spiritual Fatherhood: Pope Adrian V (*Purg.* XIX) and Virgil (*Purg.* XXI)

Just as Dante sets up a counter-position between the twin conversion narratives of Pope Adrian V (from avarice) and Statius (from prodigality) through a precise textual correspondence (the triple rhyme), so he sets up a juxtaposition between two father figures, Pope Adrian V and Virgil, through parallel genuflections.[57] In terms of posture, Dante-character's mistaken genuflection before Ottobono at the close of *Purgatorio* XIX clearly parallels Statius's correct genuflection before Virgil at the close of *Purgatorio* XXI. Dante kneels before Ottobono not because he has led him to God, but simply to show reverence to the papal office ('per vostra dignitate'; XIX, 131). Addressing Dante as 'frate', Ottobono tells him to rise up ('lèvati sù, frate'; 133), explaining that temporal hierarchies and Earthly dignities no longer apply in the afterlife. He then fulfils the role he should have performed as pope (the Earthly leader of the Christian

Statius, who was thereby saved from an eternity in Hell. The point is that the reading of pagan Latin poetry must answer to higher purposes for Dante than literal accuracy' (Heslin, 'Statius', pp. 515–16).

[56] See, for example, *Conv.* IV, x–xii: 'E però dice Tulio in quello Di Paradosso, abominando le ricchezze: "Io in nullo tempo per fermo né le pecunie di costoro, né le magioni magnifiche né le ricchezze né le segnorie né l'allegrezze delle quali massimamente sono astretti, tra cose buone o desiderabili essere dissi"' [And so Tully says in *On Paradox*, castigating riches 'At no time, certainly, have I ever said that either the money of these people, or their magnificent homes, or their riches, or their political power, or the enjoyments on which they are most intent of all are among the things which are good or desirable'] (IV, xii, 6). By contrast, Martinez argues that Statius's understanding (*Purg.* XXII, 38) regards Virgil's use of the term 'sacra' (40), where the Latin 'sacra' [feminine singular of *sacer*] may translate as 'accursed' or as 'sacred'. This ambiguity was already highlighted, for example, in Servius's late-fourth-century commentary on Virgil: the hunger for gold is 'accursed' insofar as it leads to the kind of terrible evils committed by Polymnestor (treachery and murder), but it is also 'sacred' insofar as riches may be used to good purposes, such as to worship God or to provide for widows and orphans. See Ronald Martinez, 'La "sacra fame dell'oro" (*Purgatorio* XXI, 41) tra Virgilio e Stazio: Dal testo all'interpretazione', *Letture Classensi* 18 (1989), 177–93; Ronald Martinez, 'Dante and the Two Canons: Statius in Virgil's Footsteps', *Comparative Literature Studies* 32 (1995), 151–75. See also Servius, gloss to *Aeneid* III, 57, in Maurus Servius Honoratus, *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil*, ed. by Georgius Thilo (Leipzig, 1881), in *Perseus Digital Library* http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/: '*auri sacra fames* sacra execrabilis, ut "sacrae panduntur portae". alii "sacra" devota accipiunt, unde et ver sacrum. alii sacrum pro scelestum, vel sacrilegum'.

[57] Virgil is as much the protagonist of *Purgatorio* XXI–XXII as his poetic disciple. See also Giorgio Padoan, 'Il canto XXI', p. 353: 'Questo e il canto seguente [*Purg.* XXI–XXII] sono, per antonomasia, i canti di Stazio. Ma il personaggio centrale non è Stazio, è Virgilio. Questa celebrazione dei poeti e della poesia è la celebrazione anzitutto di Virgilio.'

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faithful) by directing Dante-character to the 'santo evangelico suono' [the holy sound of the Divine Scriptures] (136), a sound explicitly contrasted with the Siren's song ('al canto mio'; 23). By contrast, Statius kneels to show reverence to Virgil precisely because it was through him – through a pagan poet – that he became a Christian ('Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano'; XXII, 73).[58] Likewise addressing him as 'frate', Virgil does not, however, correct Statius (the reverence is not wrong), but simply says that such reverence is in vain ('ché tu se' ombra e ombra vedi'; XXI, 132).

It is difficult to imagine a more powerful indictment of the medieval papacy's failure to fulfil its Divinely ordained role to lead men to God than that Statius's moral conversion from prodigality, and his secret conversion to Christianity, should have been brought about by the poet Virgil – by a pagan, and by a pagan (although, for Dante, prophetic) text, the *Aeneid*. Moreover, Dante's idiosyncratic invention of both Statius's prodigality and his hidden Christianity strongly suggests autobiographical projection: Dante-character, confronted by the she-wolf of avarice in *Inferno* I, was similarly answered not by a priest or by a pope, but by the same pagan Virgil. An autobiographical motivation, in my view, also lies behind Dante's presentation of three different kinds of paternal love, and three different species of genealogy, in the terrace of avarice. Ottobono identifies himself within a spiritual line of papal succession as the successor of Peter ('*Scias quod ego fui successor Petri*'; XIX, 99); Hugh Capet is the root of the Capetian line, a genealogical or familial bloodline ('Io fui radice de la mala pianta'; XX, 43); and finally Statius identifies himself within a poetical line, with Virgil ('la divina fiamma'; XXI, 95) as the 'mother' and 'nurse' of his poetry (97–98). Although Dante cannot pass temporal goods to his children, he can, following Virgil, assume the most important paternal role in passing on moral and spiritual wisdom not only to his children, but to all through his poetry.[59]

[58] Harald Anderson claims that scholars have searched in vain for a medieval tradition for Dante's interpretation of Statius as a closet Christian (Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius: Volume III*, pp. 65–73).

[59] Both Virgil and Statius were read through the medieval commentaries as ethical poets who taught the wisdom necessary for human flourishing. See Wilson, p. 53: 'Bernard [Silvester] believed that Virgil had interwoven into the fabric of the *Aeneid* the riches of classical (actually medieval) knowledge structured around a scheme of the ages of man. Such an assumption allowed Bernard to exhibit his philosophical knowledge but also allowed him to present a *schema* of education – modified from Fulgentius' *Virgiliana continentia* – in the broadest psychological as well as philosophical terms, from infant to mature adult.' See also Sebastiano Italia, *Dante e l'esegesi virgiliana: Tra Servio, Fulgenzio e Bernardo Silvestre* (Rome: Bonanno Editore, 2013). Medieval commentators also associate the *Achilleid* with the raising of children: 'As a teacher, Statius the poet had the authority to write about the raising and education of children, and the *Achilleid*, under this

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Prodigality As Dante's Florentine Sin

By having Virgil claim that he learned about Statius through Juvenal (*Purg.* XXII, 10–24), Dante provides, as Peter Heslin points out, 'an explicit footnote for the reader: for information about Statius life's, cf. Juvenal'. Moreover, Dante's Statius introduces himself with the words 'tanto fu dolce mio vocale spirto' (*Purg.* XXI, 88), directly alluding to Juvenal's 'tanta dulcedine' and 'ad vocem iucundam' (Satire 7:84, 2).[60] Why, then, does Dante explicitly signpost Juvenal in this way?[61] The theme of Juvenal's seventh satire is the woeful predicament of poets in the absence of aristocratic patronage.[62] Juvenal satirises the distinguished and well-known poets ('celebres notique poetae') who, lacking patronage, now lease a bathhouse or a bakehouse; even the muse Clio, in her hunger (*esuriens*; 7), has deserted the springs and moved to the salesroom (3–7). Juvenal goes on to ask how we can expect great poetry from the poverty-stricken poets of today (59–65). The poets are victims of the avaricious rich (*dives avarus*; 30), who, giving praise and nothing more (*tantum laudare*; 31), nonetheless spend extravagantly in prodigal Rome (*prodiga Roma*; 138). In addition, Juvenal claims that in such a corrupt city, prodigality is ironically necessary to get commissions ('et tamen est illis hoc utile'; 135). By signposting Juvenal, therefore, Dante is perhaps underlining the mitigating

interpretation, was seen partially as a treatise on the raising of children' (Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius: Volume III*, p. 22); Anderson notes that 'we have much indirect evidence for the *Achilleid* being read in such a manner' (p. 22, n. 61).

[60] Heslin, 'Statius', p. 515.

[61] Scholars have disputed the extent of Dante's knowledge of Juvenal's satires. See Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante: First Series* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 255–58 (especially pp. 256–57), and p. 353 (for a list of possible direct citations). Giorgio Padoan insists that Dante had direct knowledge of Juvenal's satires: 'le cui *Satirae* furono certamente note a Dante'. See Padoan, 'Il canto XXI', p. 347. For a more recent argument in favour of Dante's direct knowledge of Juvenal's satires, see Robert Black, 'Classical Antiquity', in *Dante in Context*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Barański and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 297–318: 'The frequency of his references, the ease with which he makes Juvenalian citations in different locations, the precision with which he identifies the location where he took the citation – such considerations suggest that Dante knew Juvenal directly' (p. 312).

[62] The satire begins: 'Et spes et ratio studiorum in Caesare tantum; / solus enim tristes hac tempestate Camenas / respexit' [The hopes and incentives of literature depend upon Caesar alone. He's the only one these days to have given a second glance to the despondent Camenae] (Satire, 7:1–3). See Edward Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London: Athlone Press, 1980), pp. 334–76 (p. 349): 'We may ask why, if one can look to the emperor for patronage, those who might expect to receive it are in such a miserable state of poverty. The obvious answer is that the emperor in question has not yet had time to do anything about it (c.f. 20–1; the hope expressed is in the future, *posthac* 18, a word suggesting a new departure) . . . It should also be noted that the hope expressed is remote and impersonal; there is no hint that Juvenal expects anything for himself or his kind of poetry.'

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circumstances of Statius's alleged prodigality: Statius was in good company in going hungry – Statius's *esurit* (87) echoing Clio's *esuriens* (7) – while he suffered from bad company in Rome, in which prodigality had become a virtue, and ostentatious display necessary for advancement in a career.[63] Just as Statius's post-conversion sin of *acedia* is understandable in light of Domitian's persecutions (an open faith would have demanded the extreme vigour of martyrdom), so his pre-conversion prodigality is understandable in the context of a prodigal Rome (*prodiga Roma*) characterised by avaricious rich (*dives avarus*) and impoverished poets.

Dante's castigation of modern Florence in relation to the old Florence of Cacciaguida ('Fiorenza dentro de la cerchia antica'; *Par.* XV, 97) strongly echoes Juvenal's pejorative comparison throughout the satires between the new and ancient Rome.[64] If 'prodigal Rome' might be in part to blame for Statius having fallen prey to the 'sacra *fame* de l'oro' [accursed hunger of gold], might a corrupt Florence be a mitigating circumstance for Dante-character having been overthrown by the she-wolf, whose hunger is without end ('la tua *fame* sanza fine'; *Purg.* XX, 12) and who, after feeding, is hungrier than before ('e dopo 'l pasto ha più *fame* che pria'; *Inf.* I, 99)?

If we bear in mind that all the early commentators understood Dante-character's first sin (represented by the she-wolf in *Inferno* I) to have been avarice, Virgil's perplexity with regard to Statius's avarice would also represent, at a meta-poetical level, a reader's potential perplexity with regard to the avarice of Dante-character[65]:

[63] Padoan draws attention to a medieval commentary tradition on Juvenal, which further emphasises the extreme poverty of the poet Statius. See Padoan, 'Il canto XXI', p. 347 (especially p. 347, n. 1). Clio is directly referenced as Statius's muse at *Purg.* XXII, 58: 'per quello che Clïò teco lì tasta' [by what Clio touches on with you there].

[64] Edward Walton gives an effective summary of the object of Juvenal's satire: 'The avarice and venality everywhere rampant at Rome – the influx of new customs and of new religions – the deterioration of the old Roman type of character, and the substitution for it of an insidious compound of refinement and hypocrisy, of mental culture combined with moral degradation – the sudden rise of low-born foreigners to the highest places in the Empire through a vile pandering to the appetites of the rulers – the growth of a spurious philosophy, which, under a special show of morality, tended to obliterate the eternal distinctions between right and wrong, – such are some of the main faults of his age which it was Juvenal's self-appointed task to lash with no sparing hand' (Edward Walton, *Juvenal* [Edinburg: Blackwood and Sons, 1872], p. 65). See also Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist: A Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 205: 'Dante often wrote with Juvenal's bitterness and rancour. Like Juvenal, he was an exile. Like Juvenal, he was an Italian who loved his country and was embittered by its corruption.'

[65] See, for example, Jacopo Alighieri, gloss to *Inf.* I, 49–54; Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Inf.* I, 49; Guido da Pisa, gloss to *Inf.* I, 49–51; L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Inf.* I, 49–51; Graziolo Bambaglioli, gloss to *Inf.* I, 49–54. I find it unlikely that, on such an important point, such consistency in the early commentators would be simply a 'routine case of borrowing' (Cassell,

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'come poté trovar dentro al tuo seno
loco avarizia, tra cotanto senno
di quanto per tua cura fosti pièno?'
Queste parole Stazio mover fenno
un poco a riso pria; poscia rispuose:
'Ogne tuo dir d'amor m'è caro cenno.'
(*Purg.* XXII, 21–27)

['how could avarice find a place within your breast, among such wisdom with which your studies had filled you?'
These words moved Statius to smile a little at first; then he replied:
'Every word of yours is a dear sign of love to me'].

This comparison is authorially invited through unmistakable cross-references back to the moment in limbo where Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, and Virgil make Dante-character the sixth in their company: 'sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno' [so that I was sixth among such wisdom] (*Inf.* IV, 102):

Da ch'ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,
volsersi a me con salutevol cenno,
e 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto;
e più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,
ch' e' sì mi fecer de la loro schiera,
sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.
(*Inf.* IV, 97–102)

[When they had spoken together for a time they turned to me
with sign of greeting, and my master smiled at that:
and they did me an even greater honour, for they made me
one of their band, so that I was sixth among such wisdom].

The correspondences are striking: the same triple rhyme in reverse order ('cenno / fenno / senno'); Statius's smile (*Purg.* XXII, 26) paralleling Virgil's smile (*Inf.* IV, 99); the 'caro cenno' of Virgil (*Purg.* XXII, 27) paralleling the 'salutevol cenno' of Virgil's company (*Inf.* IV, 98); and, most importantly, the displacement of 'sì ch'io fui sesto' [so that I was sixth] (*Inf.* IV, 102) with 'loco avarizia' [avarice a place] (*Purg.* XXII, 22) before 'tra cotanto senno' [among such wisdom]. Moreover, Dante frames the whole discussion of Statius's prodigality in *Purgatorio* XXII by making two explicit references to Limbo: 'nel limbo de lo 'nferno' [in the Limbo of

Inferno 1, p. 46), and there are sound contextual reasons, as Cassell himself acknowledges, for holding to this interpretation.

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Hell] (*Purg.* XXII, 14) and 'nel primo cinghio del carcere cieco' [in the first circle of the blind prison] (103). Although overlooked by scholars, the implication is, I think, clear: just as Virgil is surprised that avarice could have had a place in Statius 'tra cotanto senno' (*Purg.* XXII, 22), so Dante expects his reader to be surprised that he (apparently guilty of the sin of avarice) should have been welcomed in Limbo 'tra cotanto senno' (*Inf.* IV, 102).

Statius's explanation for being on the terrace of avarice, therefore, also serves as Dante's explanation for being overthrown by the she-wolf in *Inferno* I:

> 'La tua dimanda tuo creder m'avvera
> esser ch'i' fossi avaro in l'altra vita,
> forse per quella cerchia dov'io era.
> Or sappi ch'avarizia fu partita
> troppo da me, e questa dismisura
> migliaia di lunari hanno punita.'
> (*Purg.* XXII, 31–36)

> [Your question shows me that you believe that I was avaricious in the other life, perhaps because of that circle where I was.
> Know then that avarice was too distant from me, and thousands of months have punished this lack of measure.]

The key point is that neither Statius nor Dante was guilty of the genus of avarice after all; instead, they were guilty of its species, and opposite vice, prodigality. Dante clearly had a horror of avarice – but in reacting excessively against a vice, it was a commonplace that one was liable to fall prey to its opposite (as we saw with regard to tepidity and indiscreet fervour on the terrace of sloth).[66] But just as 'over-eagerness' seems less ignoble than tepidity, so prodigality (as an excess in liberality) indicates a more generous disposition than avarice.[67] Most importantly, the sin of prodigality associates Statius and Dante with the conversion

[66] Fosca, gloss to *Purg.* XXII, 31–33, cites *dicta* from Horace and Augustine to this effect: 'dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt' (Horace, *Satire* 1.2.24); Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IX, viii, 13: 'Difficile est namque, ut dum perverse homines vitia devitant, non in eorum contraria perniciter currant. Etenim sicut exhorrens avaritiam, fit profusus; aut exhorrens luxuriam, fit avarus.'

[67] In his translation of Aristotle's *Ethics*, Brunetto Latini highlights prodigality as his example of a vice that is close to the 'via media' of virtue (liberality) in relation to the very wide distance between two opposing vices (prodigality and avarice). See 'Appendix II: *Ethica*', in Julia Bolton Holloway, *Twice-Told Tales: Brunetto Latino and Dante Alighieri* (New York/Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 429–74 (p. 439).

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story of the most celebrated saint (the '*alter Christus*') of Dante's time, St Francis.[68]

In the lives of St Francis of Assisi, he is described, prior to his conversion, as 'very rich and prodigal. He was a squanderer of his possessions, a cautious businessman, but a very unreliable steward.'[69] Seeking to cultivate the aristocratic virtues of courtesy and liberality, Francis 'was neither avaricious nor a hoarder of money; he was a very kindly person, easy and affable'.[70] As Michael Robson notes, Thomas of Celano's whole biography of the saint is shaped by the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). Forgetting his Divine father, Francis sought to accomplish 'great deeds of worldly glory and vanity'.[71] Francis's tendency to prodigality, nonetheless, disposed him to his Christian conversion: 'He [Francis] came to realise that generosity to friends was not enough but that, out of love for God, he should be generous to the poor.'[72] In embracing voluntary poverty following his conversion, St Francis came to exhibit a 'noble prodigality':

[68] Scholars do not seem to have explored this connection with St Francis's pre-conversion prodigality. Thus even Havely passes over Statius's prodigality, noting only the 'apostolic role of the pagan poet Statius'. See *Dante and the Franciscans*, pp. 106–7.

[69] See Michael Robson, *St Francis of Assisi: The Legends and the Life* (London: Chapman, 1997), p. 17. Notably, Francis's prodigality is blamed, in part, on the bad parenting of 'all those who bear the name of Christians': 'it demands that parents raise their children, from cradle onward, in luxury and pleasure'. See also Robson, pp. 17–18: 'His faults were attributed to his parents, who were given none of the credit for his attractive qualities.' Alongside prodigality, Francis is accused, in particular, of pride and tepidity: 'Proud and high-minded, he [Francis] walked about the streets of Babylon until God rescued him. After his early diffidence and loss of nerve Francis became a prophetical voice to a society that had deviated from the teaching of the Gospel' (Robson, *St Francis*, p. 18). See also 'The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano (1228–1229)', in *Francis of Assisi,* III, pp. 180–408 (pp. 182–84).

[70] Robson, *St Francis*, p. 18. See also Chiara Frugoni, *Francis of Assisi*, trans. by John Bowden (Turin: Einaudi, 1998), pp. 7–17: 'When his [Francis's] mother heard the comments of her astonished neighbours, amazed at such prodigality, she defended him, albeit with some annoyance, since he was her favourite son. Courtesy and liberality, the virtues *par excellence* of the aristocracy, are the values which Francis planned to cultivate and take as a model, adopting the ideology of chivalry' (p. 8).

[71] Robson, *St Francis*, pp. 16–18.

[72] See Ivan Gobry, *Saint Francis of Assisi*, trans. by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), who cites *The Legend of the Three Companions*: 'In his expenditures he was so liberal that he wasted on parties and other merrymaking everything that he might own or acquire … Always generous, even prodigal, he also lacked moderation in the way that he dressed … wealthy but prodigal, he squandered his fortune instead of hoarding it' (pp. 27–28); 'He [Francis] realized that if the poor man had asked him for something in the name of a great man, a count, or a baron, he would have responded to the request favorably. Should he not have done it for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?! Henceforth he decided never to refuse anything to someone who asked in the name of God. Saint Bonaventure, echoing this little incident reported by other witnesses, adds that Francis, in his shame for having refused the alms requested for the love of God, ran after the poor man and pressed into his hand an unusual sum for a beggar … When his father was away, the young prodigal [Francis] would have an abundant table prepared, as though his father and even

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> Talem pro eleemosynis censum [amorem Dei] offerre nobilem prodigalitatem dicebat, et eos qui minus ipsum quam denarios reputarent, esse stultissimos, pro eo quod solius divini amoris impretiabile pretium ad regnum caelorum sufficiat comparandum, et eius qui nos multum amavit multum sit amor amandus. (Bonaventure, Legenda Maior, ix, 1)
>
> [He used to say that to offer such a payment [the love of God] in exchange for alms was a noble prodigality, and that those who valued it less than money were very stupid, because the inestimable value of divine love alone suffices to purchase the kingdom of heaven, and the love of the man who has loved us much is much to be loved].

In making Statius, his autobiographical cypher, a prodigal, Dante is arguably associating his own conversion story with that of St Francis. However, whereas St Francis was led to almsgiving and, subsequently, to the 'noble prodigality' of a holy beggar, the implication is that both Statius and Dante were guilty of his pre-conversion prodigality (a vice). Nonetheless, and crucially, this pre-conversion vice is still seen – through the lives of St Francis – as an excess in the chivalric virtues of courtesy and liberality, and as evidence of a benign, generous nature, itself potentially disposing a person to Christian conversion.

If we turn to Peraldus, it is similarly apparent that 'prodigality' had a much broader meaning in Dante's immediate context than simply a wastefulness with money. Peraldus considers that prodigality leads to a disdain for spiritual goods.[73] He also sees prodigality as a symptom of pride or vainglory. Indeed, Peraldus begins his discussion of prodigality by affirming that the prodigal does not give things away; rather, the wind of vainglory (*ventus vanitatis*) takes them away.[74] Moreover, he explicitly counterpoises the prodigal life with the life of preaching: where the prodigal son feeds pigs, glossed by Peraldus as the gluttonous and the luxuriant ('porcos: id est, homines gulosos et luxuriosos'), preachers feed human souls, following the example of the Son of God Himself.[75] It is

invited guests were going to take part in the meal. But these dishes were intended quite simply for the hungry, who did not fail to hammer on the door at mealtime' (pp. 28–29).

[73] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. 4, pa. 5, c. xii, p. 161a: 'Sequitur etiam inde contemptus bonorum spiritualium.'

[74] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. 4, pa. 5, c. i, p. 160a: 'Primo, in hoc, quod prodigus sua non confert, sed ventus vanitatis ei aufert.' See also p. 160b: 'Prodigus etiam pro nihilo rem suam dat, quando dat eam pro vana gloria, quae nihil est in valore. Unde Ioan. 8. "Si ergo glorificabo meipsum, gloria mea nihil est".'

[75] Peraldus, *De vitiis*, t. 4, pa. 5, c. xii, p. 161a–b: 'Prodigus adeo spiritualia contemnit, ut magnum reputet ventres parcere, et opprobrium credat esse animas parcere, cum tamen dicat Augustinus: Non est magnum parcere ventros morientes: sed magnum est parcere animas in aeternum victuras.'

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especially noteworthy, in this context, that Statius, clearly not indifferent to the wind of worldly fame (*Purg.* XI, 100–1) in presenting himself as 'very famous' ('famoso assai'; *Purg.* XXI, 87), says that he would prefer to be on Earth again with Virgil than to be on his way to Heaven:

> E per esser vivuto di là quando
> visse Virgilio, assentirei un sole
> più che non deggio al mio uscir di bando.
> (*Purg.* XXI, 100–2)
>
> [And to have lived back there while Virgil was alive, I would agree to a sun more than I owe for my release from exile].

Where Christians should give money (a temporal good) in alms as an indulgence to reduce the time of a soul's suffering in Purgatory (a spiritual good), Statius says he would be willing to increase his time of suffering in Purgatory, in exchange for a temporal good (time with Virgil on Earth). Statius thereby exhibits a love for Virgil, even over and above the spiritual good, that Dante-character himself would memorably echo in the Earthly Paradise, when even the recovery of Eden does not prevent him from weeping at the departure of his 'dolcissimo patre' [most sweet father] (*Purg.* XXX, 43–75; 50). As I argued in Chapter 6, Dante appears to confess, in this way, an excessive love for Virgil, even to the neglect of spiritual wisdom.[76]

Furthermore, it seems plausible that Dante may have associated his own pre-exile life with the prodigality of late-thirteenth-century Florence. Although emphasising that he was not guilty of the miserly sin of avarice, he may be confessing through Statius to having neither lived the life of sobriety apparently characteristic of ancient Rome or Cacciaguida's Florence nor exhibited the exemplary almsgiving of St Francis.[77] One need

Glossing the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15), he emphasises the consequences of prodigality, with the son left to the mercy of usurers who, instead, eat him up. See p. 161a: 'Mala vero, quae sequuntur ex prodigalitate haec sunt, scilicet paupertas usque ad mendicitatem, Lucae decimo quinto, de illo filio prodigo . . . Sequitur etiam inde, quod prodigus incidit in manus usurariorum, qui totum eum comedunt.'

[76] See also Winthrop Wetherbee, *The Ancient Flame: Dante and the Poets* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), pp. 197: 'The sentiment here expressed is of course utterly implausible: subject to the spiritual psychology of Purgatory, Statius could hardly deny in himself the aspiration that he is now fully ready to pursue, let along consign himself to the darkness of pre-Christian paganism. But Statius' sin had been prodigality, and there is something wonderfully prodigal about a wish whose realization would effectively defer spiritual growth in favour of the fullest possible experience of artistic discipleship.'

[77] This is perhaps a further reason for Statius accompanying Dante-character into the terrace of gluttony. Dante's first example of temperance is taken from Juvenal's sixth satire. See *Purg.* XXII,

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only consider that the next person whom Dante-character encounters after, and with, Statius is Forese Donati. In that encounter, he similarly looks back to his Florentine years with profound regret:

> Per ch'io a lui: 'Se tu riduci a mente
> qual fosti meco, e qual io teco fui,
> ancor fia grave il memorar presente.
> Di quella vita mi volse costui
> che mi va innanzi'.
>
> (*Purg.* XXIII, 115–19)

[Therefore I to him: 'If you call back to mind what you used to be with me, and I with you, the present memory will still be heavy.
From that life I was turned away by the one who goes ahead to be with me'].

Dante's Florentine vices are amply glossed by the early commentators in terms of the worldly life of a lay citizen.[78] If we read his confession in light of the conversion narrative of St Francis and the biblical *topos* of the prodigal son, this 'worldliness' is embodied in the sin of prodigality. In this respect, it is notable that Dante-character highlights Statius's conversion (from prodigality) to Forese at the conclusion of the canto (*Purg.* XXIII, 131–33).[79] Moreover, most scholars interpret this passage as also a refutation of the *tenzone*, with Dante making up, in the afterlife, for his scurrilous insinuations in the poems about Forese's wife Nella.[80] But, as Fabian Alfie rightly insists, Dante's terrace of gluttony is certainly not a wholesale retraction of the content of the *tenzone*: the mutual insinuations about gluttony, prodigality, and poverty still stand.[81] Dante claims in the

145–46: 'E le Romane antiche per lor bere / contente furon d'acqua' [And the ancient Roman women were content with water for their drink]. And see also Juvenal, Satire 6:1–20; 286–319.

[78] See, for example, L'Ottimo Commento, gloss to *Purg.* XXIII, 114–16: 'se tu ti ricordi dell'abito mio leggiadro, e delli altieri e laicali costumi ch'io aveva, quando usavamo tu ed io insieme, grave ti sarà a credere quello che io ti dirò immantanente; tanto fia diverso questo da quello'. See also Benvenuto, gloss to Purg. XXIII, 115–17: 'si tu ricordaris modo eorum quae dicebamus et faciebamus vane vacando lascivilis, emoribus, et aliis rebus vanis, sequentes delectabilia non honesta; certe talis memoria erit amara tibi'.

[79] As Benvenuto suggests, Dante-character is implying that he has changed more (in the state of his soul) since his Florentine years than even Forese, with his emaciated appearance, is changed (in the state of his body) on the terrace of gluttony. See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XXIII, 115–17: 'et sententialiter vult dicere, quod Foresius non est tantum mutatus in corpore, posquam mortuus est, quantum ipse mutatus est animo'.

[80] On the disputed authenticity of the *tenzone*, see also, for example, Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, pp. 48–49, n. 36. For a full-length study of the *tenzone*, see Fabian Alfie, *Dante's Tenzone with Forese Donati: The Reprehension of Vice* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011).

[81] Alfie argues against the hermeneutics of palinode as a blanket description of this episode: 'It is true that Dante takes the opportunity in *Purgatorio* to correct misstatements made in the *tenzone* with Donati, particularly his slander against Forese's wife. But he does not repudiate the poetics of

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tenzone that Forese's fondness for delicacies ('petti delle starne' [partridge breasts]) will lead him to penury; Forese, in response, 'insinuates that Dante had foolishly squandered his own finances', leading to his own involuntary poverty.[82] It is this 'ugly truth', in Alfie's words, which makes Dante's memory of his former times heavy ('grave'). Just as Dante identifies two distinct stages in Statius's moral life – the prodigality of his pre-conversion years, and the tepidity of his post-conversion years – so he associates the sin of prodigality with his Florentine years and the sin of tepidity, in particular, with his years as a poet-scholar in exile.

Juvenal As Ethical Model for the Exiled Poet

Although critics cite *Satire* 7:82–87 for Dante's presentation of Statius, the lines immediately following draw attention to another poet who lived in 'prodigal Rome' at the time of Statius but apparently did not fall prey to prodigality – namely, the satirist Juvenal himself:

> ille et militiae multis largitur honorem.
> semenstri vatum digitos circumligat auro.
> quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio. tu Camerinos
> et Baream, tu nobilium magna atria curas?
> praefactos Pelopea facit, Philomela tribunos.
>
> (Satire, 7. 88–92)
>
> [He's [Paris's] the one who generously hands out positions in the army and puts the gold ring on the fingers of bards after just six months. A dancer gives what the great men won't. Do you frequent the grand halls of the aristocracy, the Camerini and Barea? It's *Pelopea* that appoints prefects and *Philomela* tribunes].

The medieval lives of Juvenal (in the *accessus* commentaries) located in these very lines Juvenal's reason for writing the Satires at all – with their subject matter ('the vices of the Romans') and their purpose ('to draw his reader from the clutches of the vices') – as well as the very cause of Juvenal's subsequent exile from Rome:[83]

improperium in these cantos ... The palinode of the terrace of gluttony appears limited to the falsehoods Dante and Forese had written; the ugly truth they had presented, however, is allowed to stand' (pp. 98–99).

[82] For this interpretation of the *tenzone*, see Alfie, *Dante's Tenzone*, pp. 33–59 (p. 48). Alfie sees Peraldus as the key influence for the association between gluttony and sins of the tongue (p. 83).

[83] See School of William of Conches, 'Commentary on Juvenal', in *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary Tradition*, ed. by A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 134–38 (p. 135). In relation to this commentary, see also *Guillaume de Conches: Glosae in Iuvenalem*, ed. by Bradford Wilson (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1989): 'William believes, though, that Juvenal attacks not only particular men and customs but also moral

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> Causa vero compositionis huius operis talis est: Iuvenalis iste natus de Aquinate opido, tempore Neronis Romam venit, videnque Paridem panthominum ita familiarem imperatori ut nihil unquam nisi eius nutu ageret, ex indignatione prorupit in hos versus:
>
> Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio; tu Cameninos
> Tu Bareas, tu nobilium magna astria curas?
>
> Tandem ut eos sufficientius reprehenderet, ad satiram scribendam se transtulit, nec in Neronem et Paridem tantum, sed in alios viciose agentes reprehensio eius redundavit. Nero vero comperto, quod in eum Iuvenalis dixerat, non est ausus aperte eum exilio damnare, sed prefectum cuidam exercitui misit eum in Egiptum, pre ea exercitum sed sine ipso redire iussit. Et ita in Egipto exul mortuus est.[84]
>
> [The reason for his [Juvenal] having written this work is as follows. This Juvenal, a native of the town of Aquinas, came to Rome in Nero's time. Observing that the mimic actor Paris was on such close terms with the emperor that Nero never did anything except with his approval, he burst out into the following verse, moved by a sense of outrage: 'That which men of rank do not give, an actor will give. Do you still bother with the waiting-rooms of influential nobles?' Eventually, in order that he might reprehend them more adequately, he turned to writing satire, and not only against Nero and Paris, but his reprehension spilt over to include others who were leading wicked lives. When Nero learned of Juvenal's attack on himself, he did not dare to condemn him to exile openly, but sent him to Egypt as commander of an army, and moreover ordered the army to return but without Juvenal. So he died in Egypt].[85]

This episode provides, through Juvenal, a counter-example to Statius. Although not a Christian and therefore not (like Statius) in Purgatory,

vices – say, gluttony – by vivid description of the character and consequences of the moral sin in which the character indulged – for example, death from inability to digest an undercooked peacock. Indirect attack is, for William, the essence of the art of the satires' (p. 12); 'Satire is primarily attack, but for William that attack finds its purpose in providing moral order and attempting to draw men back from evil' (p. 53).

[84] 'Accessus ab actore incerto', in Wilson (ed.), *Glosae in Iuvenalem*, p. 89.

[85] The English translation is taken from 'Commentary on Juvenal', in Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, p. 135. Other *accessus* lives of Juvenal, albeit with variations, attest to the same tradition. See, for example, 'Accessus and Excerpts from Oxford Bodleian Auct F. 6.9 Commentarium in Juvenalem', in Wilson (ed.), *Glosae in Iuvenalem*, p. 44: 'Et primum contra Paridem pantominum ispius imperatoris exclamando hos versus edidit: "Quid non dant proceres dabit histrio" (Iuv. 7. 91) et reliqua. Quapropter ipse Iuvenalis cum imperator non auderet eum publice dagnare expulsus Roma.' I leave to one side the problematic issue of the commentator's identification of the emperor as Nero (and not Domitian). But see Wilson (ed.), *Glosae in Iuvenalem*, pp. 37–38. For Wilson's discussion of the *causa compositionis*, see pp. 54–63.

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Juvenal, as we learn from Virgil, was a virtuous pagan and thus *not* guilty of avarice or prodigality (*Purg.* XXII, 10–18).[86]

Juvenal's seventh satire gives an ideal poetic model for Dante:

> Sed vatem egregium, cui non sit publica vena
> qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, nec qui
> communi feriat carmen triviale moneta,
> hunc, qualem nequeo monstrare et sentio tantum.
> (Satire 7:53–56)

[But the outstanding bard – the one with no common vein of talent, the one who generally spins nothing trite, the one who coins no ordinary song from the public mint, the likes of whom I cannot point out, but can only imagine].

But Juvenal also underlines in his satire that Virgil could not have written the *Aeneid* without his patron, Augustus:

> . . . nec enim cantare sub antro
> Pierio thyrsumque potest contingere maesta
> paupertas atque aeris inops, quo nocte dieque
> corpus eget . . .
> nam si Vergilio puer et tolerabile desset
> hospitium, caderent omnes a crinibus hydri,
> surda nihil gemeret grave bucina.
> (Satire 7:59–71)

[Unhappy poverty, you see, cannot sing inside the Pierian cavern or grasp the thyrsus: it lacks the cash which the body needs, night and day . . . After all, if Virgil hadn't had a slave boy and decent lodgings, all the snakes would have fallen from the Fury's hair and no terrifying blast would have sounded from her silent war trumpet].

It is not difficult to see how Juvenal's satire would have rung true for the author of *De vulgari eloquentia*, bewailing the absence of an Imperial court, and struggling to find patronage. In his letters, as well as in the poem itself (notably the Cacciaguida episode), Dante makes reference to the anxiety

[86] In *Convivio* IV, xii, 8, Dante references Juvenal alongside Seneca and Horace as a moral authority in the condemnation of the riches that corrupt the spirit. Dante's specific reference to Seneca's epistles is notable, with their praise of poverty as true wealth. See, for example, *Epistle* IV, 10: '"Magnae divitiae sunt lege naturae composita paupertas." Lex autem illa naturae scis quos nobis terminos statuat? Non esurire, non sitire, non algere. Ut famem sitimque depellas, non est necesse superbis adsidere liminibus nec supercilium grave et contemeliosam etiam humanitatem pati' ['Poverty, brought into conformity with the law of nature, is great wealth.' Do you know what limits that law of nature ordains for us? Merely to avert hunger, thirst, and cold. In order to banish hunger and thirst, it is not necessary for you to pay court at the doors of the purse-proud, or to submit to the stern frown, or to the kindness that humiliates]; IV, 11: 'Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, dives est' [He who has made a fair compact with poverty is rich].

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caused by his poverty in exile. It is, he writes, his poverty that prevented him from attending the funeral of Count Alessandro in 1304: 'Nec negligentia neve ingratitudo me tenuit, sed inopina paupertas quam fecit exilium' (*Epist.* II, 3). Moreover, Dante pointedly interrupts his gloss on *Paradiso* I in the dedication letter to his patron Cangrande to highlight the urgency of his poverty, as well as his anxiety about his domestic affairs: 'urget enim me rei familiaris angustia' (*Epist.* XIII, 32). Arguably associating his pre-exile life in Florence with the 'prodigality' of Statius, Dante-character could perhaps find in Juvenal comfort for the poverty, and struggle for adequate patronage, that he subsequently had to endure in exile.

By depicting Statius's prodigality through Juvenal's seventh satire (concerning the misery of authors in 'prodigal Rome'), Dante is reflecting both on his worldly life pre-exile and on his predicament as an impoverished poet in exile, struggling to provide for his own needs and those of his family. Dante-character, however, clearly takes comfort from the exemplum of Hugh Capet, the terrace of avarice's central protagonist. Although 'love of one's children' is natural and good, it is also a dangerous occasion to avarice. In Hugh Capet's case, it led to the spiritual perdition of his descendants and, indeed, to a whole gamut of political evils for society as a whole. In antithesis to this *exemplar*, Dante constructs through the examples of poverty and liberality a parental identity that, in imitation of Fabricius, prefers honourable poverty to corrupt riches (despite the suffering that this may cause one's family) and, in imitation of Mary, trusts in God's provision. Moreover, Dante establishes his own primary role, as parent and 'father in faith', to pass on true riches – namely, Christian wisdom and holiness – to his children and, within the genealogy of poets, to society at large. These are the spiritual riches that Ottobono dei Fieschi neglected and that, in Dante's view, the contemporary Church – espoused to 'cupidity' and not to 'poverty' – fails to communicate to her flock. Dante's conviction that a lukewarm love for God leads inexorably to a disordered attachment to the world does not just underpin his critique of the clergy, however; rather, as I have argued, Dante understood the pivotal dynamic between sloth and avarice as lying at the heart of the Christian moral life in general. In his own life and in his Christian ethics, Dante saw sloth and avarice as the two cardinal vices. It is therefore no accident that sloth and prodigality (the extreme opposing vice of avarice) are the two principal vices of Statius, Dante's poetic cypher.

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Conclusion

In the penultimate canto of the *Commedia*, Dante identifies King David as 'the singer who, grieving at his sin, said "*Miserere mei*"'('[il] cantor che per doglia / del fallo disse "*Miserere mei*"'; *Par*. XXXII, 11–12). From the beginning of his poem, Dante similarly presents himself as a sinner turned singer: the very first words of Dante-character, indeed, self-consciously calque (in a conflation of vulgate and vernacular) the same penitential psalm: '*Miserere* di me' (*Inf*. I, 65). While the wrath of Achilles provides the narrative impetus for Homer's *Iliad*, and Virgil sings of Aeneas's exile from Troy and his subsequent founding of Rome, it is Dante's sin and moral failings, then, that orient his own epic narrative.[1] Emerging – at the midpoint of his life – from the dark wood and valley of sin, Dante-character attempts to ascend the delightful hill ('il dilettoso monte'; *Inf*. I, 77) of virtue and holiness. But he fails: his love of the good falls short of its proper duty (tepidity, the genus of sloth); he chooses to remain in great misery rather than to undertake the necessary work to escape it ('ignavia', a species of sloth); and he is consequently assailed by the three beasts and overwhelmed by the she-wolf (the sin of avarice), turning back to the 'dark wood' or 'perilous sea' of sin. It is Dante-character's moral failure, then, that prompts his cry for help and the intercession of Virgil *mediante Beatrice* (*Inf*. II, 49–120), and propels his entire detour through Hell (*Inf*. I, 91) and his subsequent journey through Purgatory and Paradise.

[1] Homer, *Iliad*, with an English translation by A. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), I, 1: 'Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος' [The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus's son Achilles]; Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 1–2: 'Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris / Italiam fato profugus Lavinaque venit / litora' [Arms and the man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy, exiled by fate, came to Italy and Lavine shores]. The first terzina of the *Commedia*, by contrast, highlights the author's sin: 'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita / mi ritrovai per una selva oscura / ché la diritta via era smarrita' [In the middle of the journey of our life, I came to myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost], echoing Isaiah 38:10: 'Eco dixi: In dimidio dierum meorum / vadam ad portas inferi' [I said: in the midpoint of my days I will go to the gates of Hell].

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The consideration of future pain and eternal reward – Peraldus's remedy for a tepid love of God – becomes, in effect, Virgil's remedy for Dante: to show him the desperate cries of the damned, those content in the fire of Purgatory, and the blessed people in heaven (*Inf.* I, 115–20). In the first circle of Hell, Dante-character discovers that even those of impeccable virtue are damned if they lack explicitly Christian faith. Apparently flourishing in moral and intellectual virtue and without the 'pain of sense', the virtuous pagans nonetheless experience the *poena damni*, the perpetual lack of the vision of God. In the other eight circles of Hell, Dante-character discovers that all sinful souls are also punished with the pain of sense, with each punishment ingeniously invented – 'Ahi giustizia di Dio' [Ah, justice of God] (*Inf.* VII, 19) – to fit the gravity of their fault.[2] Dante presents the principles underpinning this division of evil in terms of natural reason. On one level, this suggests, as Kenelm Foster memorably put it, that 'most of the evil we meet with in the *Inferno* is ordinary human wickedness which any man, whatever his faith, could in theory recognize as such'.[3] Moreover, Dante's particular ordering of these evils and his insistence on philosophical moral criteria serve the political extension of his ethics: through his vision of Hell, the poet represents the justice which a Holy Roman Emperor, restored to power, should ideally enact on Earth.

Dante-character's overthrow by the she-wolf had deprived him of the short path up the mountain (*Inf.* II, 118–20). Upon arriving on the shore of Purgatory and returning to the 'lost way' ('la perduta strada'), he feels that his previous journeying had been in vain (*Purg.* I, 118–20). From the perspective of eternity, all that matters is a soul's journey to Paradise, which, for Dante, requires the moral teachings of Christianity. In relation to Dante's ethical theory of 'two ends', the limbo of the virtuous pagans represents – in the afterlife – man's this-worldly felicity; in contrast, Purgatory represents the Christian moral journey to eternal salvation (man's ultimate goal), a moral journey entrusted to the Church. It is in Purgatory, therefore, that we find Dante's distinctively Christian ethics.

As Dante-character's first spoken words in *Purgatorio* make clear, he is going on this journey for his own salvation: 'per tornar altra volta / là

[2] 'Ahi giustizia di Dio! tante chi stipa / nove travaglie e pene quant' io viddi?' [Ah, justice of God! who stuffs in so many strange travails and punishments as I saw?] (*Inf.* VII, 19–20). There is a similar apostrophe in the 'evil-pocket' of the simoniacs: 'O somma sapïenza, quanta è l'arte / che mostri in cielo, in terra e nel mal mondo, e quanto giusto tua virtù comparte' [O highest Wisdom, how great is the art you show in the heavens, on Earth, and in the evil world, and how justly your Power distributes] (*Inf.* XIX, 10–12).

[3] Foster, *The Two Dantes*, p. 1.

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dov'io son, fo io questo vïaggio' [to return another time to where I am do I go on this journey] (*Purg.* II, 91–92). Dante-character appears to undergo and share the sufferings of the penitent sinners through each of the seven terraces. Moreover, the souls whom Dante-character encounters seem chosen so as to aid, first of all, his own individual moral situation and needs.[4] It is in part by addressing Dante's journey through the seven terraces of Purgatory as, first of all, a personally purgative experience that some of the richness of his treatment of the vices emerges. Why is it that, on the first terrace, Dante-character encounters three souls (all born, like Dante, in the thirteenth century) who show pride in human artistry (Oderisi), in political power (Salvani), and in ancestry (Omberto)? This is surely because these are three particular aspects of pride that Dante himself displays, and indeed acknowledges. The three examples of virtue, then, give Dante models of artistry (King David), political power (Trajan), and humility of birth (Mary), which, leading to the greatest excellence, are nonetheless founded upon a person becoming a humble vessel for God's will. Similarly, in considering why Hugh Capet should be important to Dante-character on his salvific journey, rather than simply acting as a mouthpiece for Dante's Imperial and anti-French view of history, the autobiographical dimension of *amor filiorum* [love of children] as an occasion to avarice becomes clear. Furthermore, from this perspective, it becomes apparent that Dante-character's battle against severe exhaustion in his quest for wisdom (*Purg.* XVII, 73–XVIII, 87; and XVIII, 139–XIX, 69) is the second, overlooked drama of the terrace of sloth, framing the penitent souls' physical exertion (XVIII, 88–138).

Dante's status as sinner does not inhibit, but rather enables, his status as preacher. Dante models for the reader a process of spiritual conversion, whether from pride to humility, or from sloth to zeal. Virgil's and Aristotle's pagan moral teaching in Hell seems to derive authority from their own apparently impeccable moral lives, and Cato is similarly presented, on Purgatory's shore, as the quintessential pattern of the cardinal virtues. Yet Dante's Christian moral teaching arguably becomes more authentic precisely because the poet-preacher acknowledges his own personal struggles

[4] In *Paradiso* XXI, Dante-character asks why St Peter Damian (of all the blessed) descended to speak with him. The answer lies in God's mysterious counsel that governs the world (XXI, 55–96). In its specific context, God's 'choice' of St Peter Damian is significant: a rigorous ascetic reformer and flagellant, 'Pietro Peccator' [Peter the Sinner] polemically castigates the materialism of modern clerics ('li moderni pastori'). The dialogue suggests, moreover, that – according to the poem's fiction – God 'chooses' all the souls whom Dante encounters in Paradise and, by inference, the souls he encounters in Hell and Purgatory as well.

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with sin. His appeals to the reader, as Auerbach registered, derive much of their power from this interplay between the personal – the fraternal identification of 'je m'accuse' – and the universal – the implied sense of a common fallen humanity, susceptible to vice and requiring God's grace.[5] Dante would justify his own confessional narrative, as he did Augustine's moral autobiography (*Conv*. I. ii, 14), by its utility to others. Just as Augustine drew on the resources of classical rhetoric in his preaching, so Dante uses his poetic genius to convert his reader, a sinner, from the life of sin to the life of virtue. Indeed, the stated goal of Dante's poetry is nothing less than the eternal salvation of his readers. This service to God underpins the meta-literary sense of Dante-character's first words in Purgatory: that, through writing his poem, he will merit a return to Purgatory.[6]

As Dante intended us to read his poem ethically, it should hardly surprise us that, when we do, we appreciate more fully its literary quality and aesthetic élan. In structural terms, where the *lectura Dantis* and commentary traditions tend to prioritise the formal unit of the canto, I have shown the value of reading the poem through its moral regions. Less important for *Inferno*, where one canto frequently aligns with one moral region or sub-region, it is vital for *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, where moral regions (such as terraces and planetary heavens) become more important, and invariably encompass a series of cantos. For example, in *Inferno*, Dante uses the literary device of chiasmus as the structuring principle of the tenth canto; in contrast, in *Purgatorio*, he employs chiasmus as the structuring principle of the terrace of avarice as a whole, from the confession of Hugh Capet at its centre (*Purg*. XX, 43–96) to the twin conversion narratives and parallel genuflections of its outer frame (XIX and XXI–II).[7] It is only by attending carefully to the precise ethical and poetic effects which the literary structure of chiasmus affords that the full meaning of the episode emerges. Similarly, Dante's choice and ordering of the twelve examples of pride in *Purgatorio* XII become clear when we interpret these three 'quartets' of prideful examples in relation to the three virtuous exempla (*Purg*. X) and the three penitent souls (*Purg*. XI). Many literary details in

[5] Auerbach, *Literary Language*, p. 298.

[6] See Jacopo della Lana, gloss to *Purg*. II, 91: 'io merito di questa poetrìa, che compogno, tanto che la benignità di Dio mi sortirà questo luogo all'obito mio'. See also Codice cassinese, gloss to *Purg*. II, 91: 'Quasi dicat propter compositionem poematis presentis Deus miserebitur mei et liberabor a perpetua dampnatione et revertar huc. hic dicit quod negligens fuit in mundo et tandem in fine suorum dierum opus composuit meritorium.'

[7] For a detailed analysis of Dante's use of chiasmus as a literary device in *Inferno* X, see Corbett, *Dante and Epicurus*, pp. 89–120.

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cantos XVII–XIX of *Purgatorio* are likewise missed if we read them either through the unit of the canto or as part of the 'four doctrinal cantos' (XV–XVIII). Adopting the unit of moral structure, it becomes evident, for example, that the dream of the Siren (XVIII, 139–XIX, 69) represents poetically and symbolically the doctrinal content of Virgil's three lectures (XVII, 73–XVIII, 87). It would be fruitful, in my view, to explore the other terraces of Purgatory and, indeed, all the moral regions of the poem in this way.

Of decisive importance for my own reading of Dante's Purgatory is not just an interpretation through moral structure, and in terms of his own personal ethical journey, but also in light of a reconsideration of his ethical sources. The fact that Dante's guide through Ante-Purgatory and Purgatory's seven terraces is the pagan Virgil, and not Beatrice, has led some scholars to argue that the moral order which Virgil articulates (in *Purg.* XVII) is stated in terms of philosophical principles rather than of divine revelation. In Chapters 3 and 4, I argued that the moral content and form of Purgatory are distinctively Christian, and that Dante turns to the tradition of moral theory and practice witnessed by Peraldus's *De vitiis et virtutibus*, rather than to Aquinas's reforms in Christian moral theology. As I showed in Chapters 5–7, Peraldus's *De vitiis* appears to undergird Dante's poetic treatment in Purgatory, whether in relation to his choice of exempla in the terrace of pride, or his particular treatment of prodigality and indiscreet zeal – the opposing sub-vices of avarice and sloth, respectively. As we have seen, what might otherwise seem like inconsequential details or simply descriptive adjectives in Dante's poetry can take on much broader cultural and spiritual resonances when recontextualised in the penitential and preaching materials from which, at least in part, it emerged. For example, Peraldus's treatise on sloth revealed the origin and significance of Dante's emphasis on tepidity (as the quiddity of sloth) as well as his allusions to many of sloth's sub-vices. This, in turn, led to a reappraisal of the terrace of sloth as a whole. Although I have focused on the terraces of pride, sloth, and avarice, I have no doubt that a detailed comparative reading of Peraldus's and Dante's treatments of envy, anger, gluttony, and lust would reveal further illuminating parallels.

Peraldus's *De vitiis* and Dante's Purgatory invite us to envisage Christian moral life as, first of all, a spiritual battle against the seven capital vices and their offshoots. Should we interpret Dante's Paradise as, at least in part, a poetic summa on the virtues (as I suggested in Chapter 4)? I have shown that an implicit moral structure, based on the three theological and four cardinal virtues, does appear to underpin Dante's vision of Paradise,

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and a comparative study of Peraldus's *De virtutibus* and Dante's *Paradiso* might prove similarly generative. Nevertheless, the moral tenor of Dante's *Paradiso* derives principally from his overarching conviction that the key struggle in the Christian moral life is against the cardinal vices of sloth and avarice, with a tepid love of God leading inexorably to a disordered turning to the world. Dante's emphases in *Paradiso* on the absolute material poverty of the Church, on highly ascetic religious practices, and on the religious orders in their pristine state suggest a rather sharp renunciation of the world as a prerequisite for the Christian moral life. It is the clerics' failure to think on God which, for Dante, leads them to acquire temporal power and wealth. Conversely, it is St Francis's renunciation of worldly goods which frees his heart to love God fully; where the Church is wedded to Lady Cupidity, St Francis is wedded to Lady Poverty. It is revealing, moreover, that Dante's ancestral father figure Cacciaguida ('il padre mio'; *Par*. XVI, 16) renounces the 'sweet dwelling' of Florence ('così dolce ostello'; XV, 132) to take up the crusading cross (XIV, 106), and – as a martyr in Heaven – describes the world he left behind as 'the false world, the love of which defaces many souls' ('[i]l mondo fallace, / lo cui amor molt' anime deturpa'; XV, 146–47).

Dante dramatizes in the poem this tension in his own moral life between his tepid love for God and his love of 'the false world'. While scholars typically interpret Dante's invention of Statius's secret conversion to Christianity as a means to represent – in the poem – the influence of Virgil on his own poetic and Christian conversion ('Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano'; *Purg*. XXII, 73), I have underlined the autobiographical implications of Dante's invention of Statius's prodigality and sloth (which, like his conversion to Christianity, have little or no grounds historically or in the subsequent commentary traditions). Indeed, I have suggested that Dante may have deliberately constructed his representation of Statius as, in addition to a poetic cypher, a moral cypher. Dante's careful quantification of Statius's sins – 500 years for prodigality (XXI, 68); 400 years for sloth (XXII, 92); 304 years for the sins of pride, envy, and wrath (and Ante-Purgatory); a single day for gluttony and lust – might contribute, on this view, to a speculative and partial profile of Dante's sense of his own sins. Dante's relative sinning in pride and envy is registered on the second terrace (XIII, 133–38). With regard to anger, although Dante's rationale fails to distinguish adequately between righteous indignation at a wrong suffered (virtuous) and an unbounded hatred irrespective of the limits of justice (vicious), the apparently genocidal outbursts against the populations of Pisa and Genoa certainly appear to be examples of the latter

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('ira mala' [sinful anger]; XVII, 69).[8] Dante's relative sinning in sloth and avarice is registered – through Statius – on the fifth terrace. Finally, the effortless ascent of Statius through the terraces of gluttony and lust, and Dante's emphasis that these are, for him, lighter sins (XXII, 7–8), might suggest the (albeit minority) view that Dante presents himself as relatively unafflicted by these vices.[9]

Dante's delineation of prodigality as Statius's pre-conversion sin and of sloth as his post-conversion sin is, I have argued, potentially significant: it may suggest a similar delineation – in Dante's own moral autobiography – between a particular tendency to prodigality in his Florentine years, and to sloth in his exile. It seems plausible that, in rejecting the ignoble vice of avarice, Dante strayed in the other direction, being overly generous, overly courteous, with his own (albeit limited) temporal goods. Dante strongly implies this through Statius's staged confession of 'prodigality', which immediately precedes Dante-character's encounter with Forese Donati and the troubled memory of his Florentine past. Shortly after the date of

[8] See Barnes, 'Deadly Sins', in Barnes and O'Connell (eds.), *Dante*, pp. 319–41 (pp. 324–26, 336–37). At a metapoetic level, the *Commedia* is neither a poem of revenge against his enemies ('the Wrath of Dante'), as Borgese suggested, nor an entirely impartial enactment of justice, as Dante himself appears to claim. See G. A. Borgese, 'The Wrath of Dante', *Speculum*, 13: 2 (1938), 183–93 (p. 186). Certainly, Dante associates the anger of God and of the blessed with justice. Thus Beatrice emphasises that Peter Damian's diatribe against the corrupt Church and the ensuing cry of the blessed (*Par*. XXI, 127–42) derives, as does all anger in Heaven, from his 'buon zelo' [good zeal], anticipating the just vengeance ('la vendetta') of God (*Par*. XXII, 7–18). The term 'zelo' is used on only two other occasions in the *Commedia*: by Nino Visconti in Ante-Purgatory (*Purg*. VIII, 82–84) and by Dante-character in the Earthly Paradise (*Purg*. XXIX, 22–24). In both cases, their zeal for justice regards the sin or apparent infidelity of women. Nino's wife renounced widowhood six years after his death to marry Galeazzo Visconti (*Purg*. VIII, 73–81), and he misogynistically infers from her example that the fire of love in women lasts little, if sight or touch do not frequently kindle it ('Per lei assai di lieve si comprende / quanto in femmina foco d'amor dura, / se l'occhio o 'l tatto spesso non l'accende'; *Purg*. VIII, 76–78). Dante-character reproves with 'buon zelo' [good zeal] Eve who, newly created, alone, and with no bad example ('femmina, sola e pur testé formata'; *Purg*. XXIX, 26), was unfaithful to God, not suffering to stay under any veil ('non sofferse di star sotto alcun velo'; 27). Indeed, Benvenuto explicitly associates the perfectly formed Eve's disobedience to God with the disobedience of fallen women to their husbands ('Si ergo ista mulier in tanta perfectione formata noluit obedire praecepto Altissimi, quomodo ergo foemina ab homine generata erit obediens viro suo?'; Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg*. XXIX, 22–27).

[9] As the early commentators point out, gluttony and lust – as failures to contain the sensual appetite – are particularly unbefitting vices for a mature poet, such as Virgil, Statius, or Dante himself. Similarly, citing Cicero, Brunetto Latini highlights that the wise – who know the nature of man to rise above the appetites of beasts – should naturally contain these lower appetites out of modesty ('En luxure n'a nulle haute chose qui soit avenant a nature d'ome, ainz est baisse chose et chaitive qui vient de luxure au vilain membre … se aucuns est trop enclins, guarde soi qu'il ne soit dou lignaige as bestes; mes se il est saiges et volenté le sorprent, il ripont son apetit por vergoigne'; Latini, *Il Tresor*, II, 76, pp. 506–8). For a balanced argument in favour of the majority view that lust was, in fact, one of Dante's major sins, see Tristan Kay, 'Dante's Ambivalence towards the Lustful', in Barnes and O'Connell (eds.), *Dante*, pp. 271–302.

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the fictional other-worldly journey (1300), Dante would be forcibly exiled from Florence and stripped of his temporal possessions. His own fate stands in contrast to that of Cacciaguida, who chose to embrace the cross of exile as a penitent crusader, and the 'noble prodigal' St Francis, who renounced his possessions to embrace voluntary poverty out of love for God.

Sloth is a sin particularly associated with the contemplative life. As an exiled scholar and poet, it again seems plausible that Dante would have had to struggle especially against the pull of this vice (a struggle, I have suggested, he dramatizes in his own person on the terrace of sloth). By attributing 'tepidity' to Statius as his post-conversion sin, Dante also seems – midway through writing his own *magnum opus* (c. 1310–1315) – to be registering the danger of leaving his own work, through sloth, incomplete, just as Statius, the delayer (*status*), failed to complete the *Achilleid*.

What, then, of Dante's confession to Beatrice in the Earthly Paradise? Dante confesses that 'present things with their false pleasure turned my steps as soon as your face was hidden' ('le presenti cose / col falso lor piacer volser miei passi / tosto che 'l vostro viso si nascose'; *Purg.* XXXI, 34–36), and Beatrice replies: 'another time, hearing the Sirens, you may be stronger' ('e perché altra volta, / udendo le serene, sie più forte'; 44–45).[10] Dante's sin is thereby explicitly associated with the terrace of sloth's protagonist, the Siren. While early commentators interpret 'Beatrice' as 'she who beatifies' or 'governing the blessed man', they take 'Siren' as Greek for the Latin 'attahere', meaning to pull, drag, or allure.[11] In the tradition of *nomen rei significans*, the siren is an anti-Beatrice who – like sloth itself – drags Dante astray from, rather than guiding him towards, beatitude.[12] The symbolic power of the Siren as a negative shadow of Beatrice is emphasised through their self-presentation in the poem. In the Earthy Paradise, and just before scolding Dante-character for following 'the Sirens', Beatrice announces herself 'Ben son, ben son

[10] See also Giorgio Padoan, 'Sirene (Serena)', in *ED*, vol. V, pp. 268–69.

[11] Benvenuto, gloss to *Inf.* II, 70–72: 'dicitur enim Beatrix quasi beatum regens'; Francesco da Buti, gloss to *Purg.* XXX, 22–36: 'Questa Beatrice significa la santa Teologia, come ditto è, e chiamala Beatrice, perché beatifica in questo mondo l'anima che si dà ad essa per grazia e nell'altro poi per gloria'; Pietro Alighieri [1], gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 19–24: 'Ideo dicitur Sirena a sirin graece, quod latine est attrahere.' For the first commentators on the poem, it was natural to read Beatrice predominantly, if not exclusively, as a symbolic figure. The current (and in my view, insufficiently justified) scholarly consensus is that Beatrice is a specific woman (Beatrice Portinari), who comes to signify, in Dante's poetry, theology or the divine science.

[12] Brunetto Latini simply substitutes disbelief ('mescreance') for sloth (Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, II, 131, p. 628).

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Beatrice' [Truly I am, truly I am Beatrice; *Purg.* XXX, 73], seemingly playing on the etymology of her name by stating that 'qui è l'uom felice' [here is man happy] (75). Beatrice corrects, in this way, the self-presentation of the siren – 'Io son . . . io son dolce serena' [I am I am a sweet siren] – who enchants sailors in mid-sea and leads them to moral shipwreck ('che ' marinari in mezzo mar dismago'; XIX, 19–21).[13]

On this view, Beatrice embodies – in the poem – the Divine wisdom of theology that guides Dante towards beatitude (and she will be, of course, the pilgrim's guide through the realm of the blessed), while the Siren embodies all the forms of disordered love (the seven capital vices) that turn one away from God. Pietro d'Alighieri interprets his father's principal sin more specifically, as an immoderate love of poetry and philosophy (symbolised by his excessive love of Virgil), along with a neglect of the study of Divine wisdom (symbolised by his deficient love of Beatrice).[14] From this perspective, and following Peraldus, we might tentatively gloss Dante's confession in the Earthly Paradise in terms of *avaritia scientiae* (the cupidity of knowledge) as well as *tepiditas* (the insufficient love of God).[15] As Augustine emphasised, the rational knowledge of science is ultimately unfruitful because it pertains to earthly things, whereas wisdom concerns knowledge of eternal things, and hence our eschatological destiny.[16]

[13] This clause echoes the predicament of Dante-character in *Inferno* I ('nel mezzo del cammin'), who is compared to a sailor who has just reached the shore but nearly drowned in mid-sea ('come quei che con lena affannata / uscito fuor del pelago a la riva'; *Inf.* I, 22–23). It also echoes the situation of Dante-character and Virgil in the opening of the terrace of sloth, when they are compared to a ship that is beached ('eravamo affissi / pur come nave ch'a la piaggia arriva'; *Purg.* XVII, 77–78).

[14] Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XXX, 55–84: 'Fingit se hic nunc ita reprehendi auctor de eius omissione studii dictae theologiae sub proprio nomine ipsius auctoris a Beatrice . . . fingendo se primo reprehendi auctor sub dicto colore a Beatrice tanquam nondum vere perfectus deplorando Virgilium recedentem ita ab ipso, quasi non adhuc explicitus ab amore mundanae scientiae rationalis, pro qua in hoc passu ipsum Virgilium accipit et ipsam Beatricem pro sapientia divina . . .'; Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XXX, 22–55: '[Dantes] dedit se studio poesiae et camenis et oblectamentis vanis poetarum et aliis mundanis et infructuosis scientiis'.

[15] Dante explicitly associates cupidity, like sloth, with the Sirens (*Epist.* V, 4: 'Nec seducat alludens cupiditas, more Sirenum nescio qua dulcedine vigiliam rationis mortificans'). In *Convivio*, IV, xii–xiii, Dante is nonetheless careful to distinguish the desire for riches from the desire for knowledge: while accumulation increases desire in both cases (and this increase is not the cause of the baseness of riches), the desire for knowledge is satisfied in discrete steps (as particular truths are known), whereas the desire for riches is one step, and grows simply by quantity (as ten is a part of one hundred). The sin of *avaritia scientiae*, if attributed to Dante at all, should be understood specifically in relation to his apparently excessive love and curiosity for earthly knowledge, which distracted him from his love of divine wisdom.

[16] Pietro underlines Augustine's distinction between wisdom and science. See Pietro Alighieri [3], gloss to *Purg.* XXX, 55–84: 'Haec est recta distinctio sapientiae et scientiae, et ad sapientiam pertineat intellectualis cognitio ecternarum rerum, ad scientiam vero temporalium rerum cognitio rationalis.'

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As the Siren is an anti-Beatrice, so Ulysses is the pagan shadow for the Christian Dante. Highlighting the rich tradition of reading Ulysses as a figure for Christ, Michelangelo Picone effectively contrasts the successful models for Dante's descent into Hell (Aeneas) and ascent into Heaven (St Paul) with Ulysses, the negative archetype for Dante's unprecedented journey up the seven terraces of Purgatory to the Earthly Paradise.[17] Ulysses' failed attempt to reach Eden is narrated, of course, in *Inferno* XXVI, and is referenced explicitly in the opening cantos of Purgatory, and on the terrace of sloth: the sweet Siren ('dolce serena'; *Purg.* XIX, 19), we learn, turned Ulysses from his wandering path ('Io volsi Ulisse del suo cammin vago'; 21).[18] Whereas Ulysses' ardour for knowledge of the world and of human vices and worth ('del mondo esperto / e de li vizi umani e del valore') led him to seek out a world without people ('l'esperïenza, / di retro al sol, del mondo sanza gente'; *Inf.* XXVI, 116–17), Dante literally 'takes on board experience' ('esperïenza imbarche'; *Purg.* XXVI, 75) of a Purgatorial region populated by Christian souls in an effort to save himself, to die better ('per morir meglio').[19]

Whereas Ulysses' tragedy – which might have been Dante's own – ends in damnation (shipwreck), Dante's comedy, beginning in the misery of sin, ends in salvation (the port in which his soul eventually finds rest).[20] Dante-character's first words in *Paradiso* (addressed to Beatrice) – 'Già contento *requïevi*' [Already contented, I rested] (*Par.* I, 97) – counterpoise his first words in *Inferno*

[17] See Michelangelo Picone, 'Canto XIX', in *Lectura Dantis Turicensis: Purgatorio*, ed. by Georges Güntert and Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), pp. 287–306: 'Il viaggio di Dante nell'Oltretomba è certo modellato sul *descensus ad Inferos* di Enea e sull'*ascensus ad Paradisum* di S. Paolo . . . ma esso intende più particolarmente contrastare il viaggio di Ulisse verso l'Eden affabulato nel XXVI canto dell'*Inferno*, vuole riscrivere in chiave "comica" la navigazione "tragica" dell'eroe Greco.' See also Michelangelo Picone, 'Dante, Ovidio e il mito di Ulisse', *Lettere Italiane* 43 (1991), 500–16. Picone works with reference to Hugo Rahner's seminal work. See 'VII. Odysseus at the Mast', in Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. by Brian Battershaw (London: Burns & Oats, 1963), pp. 328–87.

[18] Benvenuto seems to interpret 'vago' in its Latin sense as 'wandering': he explains that the journey is 'vago' because Ulysses has journeyed already for ten years ('quia perigrinatus est per decennium'). See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XIX, 16–24. I realise, however, that there are alternative readings which translate 'vago' as 'desirous', and use this to qualify either Ulysses' desire for his original path ('del suo cammin vago') or his desire for the Siren's song ('vago / al canto mio)'.

[19] In her vertical reading of the Ulysses canto, Elena Lombardi effectively contrasts Ulysses' 'ardore' for knowledge, with the burning of a soul (the poet Guinizelli) in the Purgatorial flames ('che 'n sete e 'n foco ardo'; *Purg.* XXVI, 18), and with the burning of Dante's love for Beatrice ('ella entrò col foco ond' io sempr' ardo'; *Par.* XXVI, 15). See Elena Lombardi, 'The Poetics of Trespassing', in Corbett and Webb (eds.), *Vertical Readings in Dante's 'Comedy'*, III, pp. 71–88 (pp. 87–88).

[20] See Benvenuto, gloss to *Purg.* XVII, 76–78: 'Sicut enim navis firmatur ad plagiam, ut stet ad tempus, et postea tandem perveniet ad portum, ubi tutissime quiescat, ita nunc ingenium poetae, ad summitatem scalae ubi staret ad noctem; et ita iam fecit alibi, et faciet donec perveniet ad Deum in quo tamquam in placido portu men post longam navigationem quies det.'

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(addressed to Virgil): '*miserere* di me' (*Inf.* I, 65).[21] Thus the Christian moral journey from misery to happiness, '*de statu miseriae . . . ad statum felicitatis*' (*Epist.* XIII, 15), from Hell to Paradise, is equated to Dante-character's ascent of the seven terraces of Purgatory. As Dante-character's first words in *Purgatorio* (addressed to his Florentine contemporary Casella) highlight, he is undergoing the journey in this life ('fo io questo vïaggio') so as to return to Purgatory in the next ('per tornar altra volta / là dov'io son'; *Purg.* II, 91–92). This is the journey of Dante's Christian ethics: the purging of souls in Purgatory (the *ecclesia poenitens*) and, figuratively, the purification of penitent souls on Earth (the *ecclesia militans*).

At a meta-literary level, the pagan Ulysses' ultimately 'vain' and 'wandering' (vago) pursuit of secular 'knowledge' and 'virtue' contrasts with the Christian poet's journey ('la navicella del mio ingegno' [the little boat of my intellect]; *Purg.* I, 3) in completing – 'fino a la fine' [right to the end] (*Purg.* XVIII, 137) – the *Commedia*. It is striking to note that Hugh Rahner turns precisely to this relationship between Dante's salvific journey through Purgatory and Ulysses' tragic shipwreck in Hell, in attempting to sum up the cultural condition of the West in the mid-twentieth century. For Rahner, Dante's Ulysses embodies the 'fateful fall of the West into sin' when it broke from the 'secure embrace between Hellas and the Church' in turning away from Christ, and from the eschatological perspective of the world-to-come: 'For here we no longer have the home-loving Odysseus of the last books of Homer's epic but an unhappy man whose spirit drives him out of the security of his father's home into the bold and godless venture of mastering the world by his own strength.' Rahner asks 'Will the shipwrecked West master it [the mountain of Purgatory] and so once more become worthy "to soar upwards towards heaven"?' Only, he affirms, when it 'has begun to pray with the words of the lofty prayer to the Logos' in embracing, again, the Christian mystery: 'All things are yours but ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.'[22] Whether or not twenty-first century readers are receptive to the immediate (and, for Rahner, prophetic) urgency of Dante's Christian ethics, I hope that this book has demonstrated – even to a predominantly secular academy – that approaching the poem as a work of ethics (*morale negotium, sive ethica*) – as it was originally envisaged – leads to a greater appreciation of Dante's eschatological innovations and his literary genius.

[21] Dante's language directly evokes the opening of Augustine's *Confessions*: 'inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te' [my soul is restless until it rests in you].
[22] Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, pp 389–90.

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